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scolding, uproar, and blows. I had constantly on my side a young friend whom I called Pylades. In one of our comic wars he sided with my adversaries; but he scarcely kept up his hostility for a moment, and, leaving his companions, rushed into my arms. We burst into tears, and mutually vowed an eternal friendship, to which our hearts ever after remained faithful.

I detested falsehood and dissimulation, and was an enemy to levity. It was easy to perceive from my manners that I thought seriously of my duties both towards others and myself. I was sometimes reminded in a friendly way, but oftener still ironically, of the dignity I pretended to. I had several friends, and still more enemies. I and my adherents were often roughly roused from these fantastical reveries in which we were so fond of indulging. We therefore ran no risk of enervating ourselves by these sallies of the imagination. Our tribulations and contests interrupted them but too often.

Physical sufferings assisted to endow me with the stoical virtues suitable to my age. Our masters often treated us with the greatest severity. The cane and the rod were not spared in our education. We hardened ourselves to these inflictions as well as we could; for the least attempt at resistance would only have drawn double chastisement upon us.







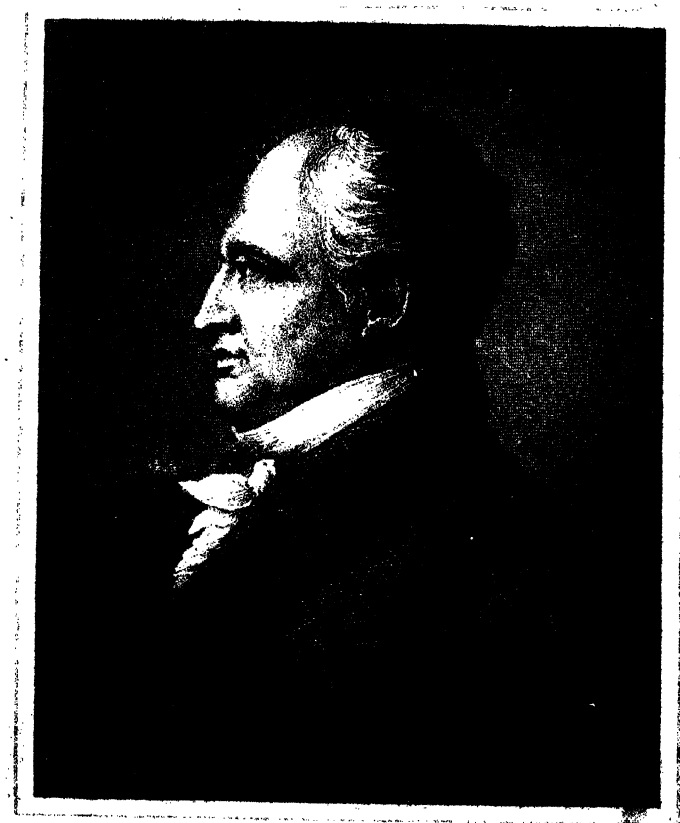












# MEMOIRS

OF

# GOËTHE:

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

VOL. I.

LONDON

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## P R E F A C E.

THE original publication from which the following translation is executed, is entitled *Aus Meinem Leben*, which may be translated "Extracts from my Life." There is also a second title, *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, by which the author seems to intimate that he exhibits the *poetry* as well as the *prose* of his life, and that his narrative, which has all the air of romance, possesses also the truth of history. It will indeed be found that his juvenile feelings and early attachments are painted in an animated and masterly style,—that the characters of his family and friends are finely drawn,—and that all the scenes of his youth,—all his literary enterprizes,—in short, all the transactions in which he was engaged during the period his narrative embraces, are described with a picturesque effect, which renders the story unusually interesting.

That Goëthe should, at his advanced age, have composed so detailed and so unreserved an account of what

he did and felt in early life, is a fact which may excite some surprise. In explanation of this, it will be proper to state, that the original was published in Germany, in compliance with the solicitations of the author's friends, who were anxious to be made acquainted with the circumstances which had, at different times, given rise to Goëthe's writings. It is worthy of remark, that many of the most important productions of our author's powerful and versatile genius, notwithstanding the permanent interest they possess, were, in their origin, merely occasional works; each having been indebted for its birth to the influence of some occurrence in real life, the external circumstances of which have served to unfold the inward feelings of the author, or the philosophic and religious ideas with which his mind happened at the time to be imbued. It could not be denied that the explanation thus demanded was calculated to form a valuable addition to works of the kind we have described. Goëthe accordingly acceded to the wishes of his friends, and proceeded to write an account of his life, of which the subjoined translation contains the only parts which have as yet been published in the form of Memoirs; for his travels in Italy, France, &c. are not biographical narrative. Of the work here presented to the public we may be permitted to state, that

it is full of curious facts relative to Goëthe and the German writers with whom he has associated and corresponded, and that, in this respect, it is highly interesting, inasmuch as it shews how he has been influenced by the authors and the literature of his country, as well as by the events and opinions of his time; and, on the other hand, how his own powerful talents have reacted on the literature of Germany, and on its writers, of whom he may now be regarded as the Prince and Patriarch.

As many of the distinguished individuals alluded to in the course of these Memoirs are not generally known in this country, a variety of explanatory Biographical Notices are given as an appendix to the second Volume. In order that they may be readily consulted, they are arranged alphabetically, and it is presumed that these illustrations will not prove unacceptable to the English reader.



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# MEMOIRS OF GOËTHE.

## CHAPTER I.

It was on the 28th of August, 1749, exactly at noon, that I came into this world, at Frankfort on the Maine. I was born under fortunate auspices; the sun was in the sign of the Virgin at the utmost degree of elevation. The aspects of Jupiter and Venus were favourable to the day. Mercury testified no signs of hostility; Saturn and Mars were neutral. The moon, however, then near the full, was an important obstacle; and the more so, as the labour which attended my birth coincided with the hour of her new phase. She retarded my entrance into the world until that moment had elapsed\*.

\* Here Goëthe, in imitation of Sterne, alludes to the reveries of the astrologers. Our readers are aware that, according to their system, the revolutions and movements of the stars in their course have a decisive influence over the birth and destiny of every individual. To determine this influence, according to the position of the stars at the moment of birth, is what they call drawing the horoscope.

This favourable aspect of the stars, of which I afterwards learned all the importance, was no doubt the cause of my preservation; for, owing to the unskilfulness of the midwife, I was supposed to be dead at the instant of delivery; nor was I brought to life without much pains and exertion. This circumstance, which excited so much alarm in my parents, proved, however, fortunate for my fellow-citizens; for my maternal grandfather, John Wolfgang Textor, who was pretor, and in that capacity president of the senate of Frankfurt, took that opportunity of establishing a course of midwifery; \* to which institution there can be no doubt but that many of the inhabitants born since my nativity are indebted for ~~their~~ lives. My birth, therefore, was a benefit to ~~my~~ native city.

In attempting to recall to mind the events of our earliest infancy, we are liable to confound what we have heard from others with our own recollections; but amongst the particulars I remember of my infantine days, the plan of our habitation is one of the most distinct. Our house, composed of two dwellings united, bore marks of the ravages of time. My grandmother, my father's mother, to whom it belonged, lived

\* Sterne likewise attributes the institution of a course of midwifery to the difficult birth of his hero Tristram Shandy.

in it with us. When I endeavour to recollect this excellent grandmother, my memory represents her as a handsome, sprightly, sweet-tempered, kind woman, who bestowed great attention on her dress and appearance.

Behind the house, and particularly from the upper story, there was a very pleasant prospect of a great extent of level country, beyond the gardens of the neighbourhood, which reached in succession as far as the gates of the city. But although we enjoyed the view of these gardens, the situation of our own house deprived it of a similar advantage, for which the balconies attached to the windows of our first floor were but a poor substitute. This was all the garden we had, and was my favourite retreat in childhood. There I went in summer to learn my lessons; and there I waited impatiently for sunset, to see the neighbours walking in their gardens, cultivating their parterres, and amusing themselves with their friends, whilst their children gamboled around them. Thus I early imbibed a taste for solitude, which afterwards acquired the strength of a passion. Although this habit of serious thought and meditation was far from according with my natural disposition, it speedily assumed an empire over me, which time only served to confirm.

The antiquity of our dwelling, its situation

in a nook, and the darkness which reigned in many parts of it, were well adapted to excite the sentiment of fear in juvenile bosoms. But it was then a maxim in education not to allow children to be fearful of invisible objects; they were to be early familiarized with all that terrifies the imagination, whether they would or not. We were therefore compelled to sleep alone; and whenever we were discovered attempting to take refuge with the servants, under the influence of fear, my father, in his nightgown, would suddenly appear in our way, and force us to return to bed. How were we to surmount our weakness, with our hearts thus hemmed in between two opposite apprehensions? My mother, with her never-failing kindness, tried more gentle means. An ample allowance of peaches was promised us, in the season, on condition of our passing the night quietly. Hope thus silenced our fears, to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

I had constantly before my eyes, at home, a collection of views in Rome, with which my father had ornamented an antechamber. These engravings were by one of the predecessors of Piranesi, a celebrated engraver, equally skilful in the representation of architectural subjects, and the choice of fine perspectives. In these I daily contemplated the *Piazza del Popolo*, the

*Coliseum*, the square and church of St. Peter, the interior and exterior of that grand monument, the castle of St. Angelo, &c. These objects impressed themselves on my memory. My father, who in general spoke but little amongst us, nevertheless condescended sometimes to describe them. He was enthusiastically fond of the Italian language, and of every thing relating to Italy. He had brought from that country a small collection of marbles, and specimens of natural history, which he occasionally showed us. Great part of his leisure hours was devoted to the description of his travels in Italy; a work on which he bestowed extraordinary pains and patience, in correcting and transcribing. In this undertaking he had procured the assistance of an old Italian master, of a most lively character, named Giovinazzi. This old man was also an agreeable singer: my mother daily practised music with him, accompanying him on the harpsichord; and thus I soon learned the *Solitario bosco ombroso*, before I could understand a word of it.

My father was by nature particularly partial to the occupation of teaching. In his constant seclusion from business, he was always ready to impart to others what he knew himself. He had accordingly given my mother, in the early years of their union, lessons in systematic writing, on

the harpsichord, and in singing. He had also taught her Italian, which language she spoke with facility.

In our hours of recreation we remained in our grandmother's apartment, where we could play at our ease. It was a memorable day for us when first this good grandmamma treated us with a sight of a little puppet-show theatre. Its dumb performers made a powerful impression on me, which became the source of far deeper impressions than I felt when I afterwards beheld, instead of this automatic theatre, a stage peopled with living, moving, and speaking beings. The emotions caused by these dramatic scenes decided the destiny of my life. This infantine good fortune was the last for which we were indebted to our grandmother, whom we soon afterwards lost; a calamity which occasioned a new event in our family. My father was fond of building; he understood architecture. He had postponed his plans during the life of my grandmother; but on her death he had the house repaired, or rather rebuilt. During the progress of the work he was obliged to send us, though against his inclination, to boarding-schools in the town. Having been brought up in the manners of a well-bred family, although with strictness, I found myself uncomfortably situated amidst a crowd of vulgar, rude children, from whom I had much to

endure, unable as I was to contend with them on equal terms. Fortunately we were allowed a considerable share of liberty, of which I availed myself with a few chosen companions in traversing Frankfort, its walks, and ramparts. I was fond of roaming about the old town, in its narrow, gloomy streets, and viewing its antique towers and gates. Already had the sight of these Gothic buildings, erected at a period when continual troubles and alarms gave every town the appearance of a fortress and a place of refuge, inspired me with a desire to study the history of our national antiquities. My favourite walks were the great bridge over the Maine, which commands a delightful view, and Saxenhausen\*. Nor was the Roëmerberg less attractive to us. Our excursions about the new city always afforded us new gratifications. We were astonished to find in a single town a great number of small towns, and many little forts in a single fortress. Such was to us the aspect of all those cloistered buildings, surrounded by high walls; and all those walls more or less distinguished by their own ruins, which had in past times enclosed a number of suburbs now confounded with the town itself. Such appeared to us the Nuremberg Court, the quarters of Compostell, Braun-

\* A promenade near Frankfort.

fels, Stallburg, and many others. Frankfort was not then embellished with any monument of architectural beauty ; but every thing throughout the city recalled to mind the alarms of a very ancient period. The gates and towers which marked the boundaries of the old town or surrounded the new one, and the walls, ramparts, bridges, and ditches which appeared in every direction, were all indicative of that age of war and commotion, in which such edifices were required for the general safety ; and every thing tended to show that the squares and streets, even of the most recent erection, had not originated in any regular plan. The ancient chronicles and old wood-cuts, such as the siege of Frankfort by Grave, served both to nourish and gratify my rising taste for the history of those remote times. I discovered a new pleasure in these pursuits ; I delighted in studying the history of various nations, without looking for any other interest than that of the variety and truth of the manners described, independently of all considerations of moral importance or beauty. One of our most amusing excursions was to make the circuit of the city, which we did twice a-year, on the walls themselves. How many gardens, inner courts, and back buildings we viewed in the course of these walks ! How many thousand men then ap-



peared to us in their most private retreats ! From the pompously embellished pleasure-grounds of the wealthy, to the humble kitchen-garden of the meanest citizen, nothing escaped our eager sight. The whole world of a great city was unfolded to our eyes; and our infantine curiosity was never satiated with a view which at every step still seemed to vary, and to afford new wonders. The scene which Asmodeus discovered to Cleophas, when he exposed to his eyes by night the roofs of the houses of Madrid, could scarcely have competed, in point of interest and variety, with that which we enjoyed in broad daylight. The keys of all the towers, gates, and stairs of this promenade were in the hands of the gaoler, whose good-will we did not forget to conciliate by every attention on our part.

A monument of still greater interest, and the sight of which was more instructive to us, was the Hôtel de Ville, known by the name of the Roman palace (Roëmer): we were fond of wandering in its vaulted halls. We obtained admission to the largest of these halls, admirable in its simplicity; that in which the senate held its sittings. It was wainscoted half way up; the upper part of the walls, and the roof, were bare. No pictures or statues adorned it: the following inscription, placed at the top of the middle wall,

was the only thing that attracted notice : “ One man’s word alone signifies nothing ; both parties must be heard.”

After we gained admission to the Roëmer, we often mingled in the crowd which thronged to the burgomaster’s audience. But what interested us most was the election and coronation of the emperor. Every thing that related to these pompous ceremonies was an object of our curiosity. Favoured by the protection of the gaoler, we were permitted to ascend the staircase reserved for the head of the empire. This staircase was new, very handsome, painted in fresco, and closed by a lattice. We examined with great respect the hall in which the election is held, decorated with purple carpeting and gilt pannels. The upper part of the doors, on which were painted children or genii clothed in the imperial ornaments, and carrying in their hands the insignia of the empire, particularly attracted our attention. It was with great difficulty that we were removed from the imperial hall, into which we once succeeded in penetrating, and where, with our eyes fixed on the portraits of the emperors, we considered any person who would relate to us some particulars of their history as a real friend.

We were told many fabulous stories about Charlemagne ; but Rodolph of Hapsburg, who

by his masculine firmness found means to put an end to a long period of anarchy, was the first of these potentates in whom we felt any historical interest. We were told of the golden bull of Charles IV. and his criminal code; and this prince had also in our eyes the great merit of having forgiven the inhabitants of Frankfort their attachment to his competitor Günther of Schwartzburg. We heard Maximilian praised for his humanity and condescension, and were told that it had been predicted to him that he would be the last emperor of the German race; a prediction accomplished, after his death, by the competition for the throne of the empire between Charles V. King of Spain, and the French King Francis I. It was observed to us that a similar prophecy, or rather presage, seemed to threaten us. We had, in fact, an opportunity of convincing ourselves, with our own eyes, that there was but one place left for an emperor's portrait; and this accidental circumstance excited uneasiness in many patriotic minds.

We were never tired of hearing the accounts of the coronations of the Emperors Charles VII. and Francis I. of Lorraine: that of Charles VII., the consequences of which were so unfortunate, was fresh in the memory of the women, whom that emperor's handsome person had charmed. The other sex recollected with still greater plea-

sure the coronation of Francis of Lorraine, embellished by the beauty of the Empress Maria Theresa. The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle left every one at leisure to praise his favourite emperor.

The feasts and singular ceremonies of Frankfurt fair were likewise no inconsiderable aliment to our curiosity. To us one of the principal attractions of these festivals was the presence of our maternal grandfather, who, as pretor, presided over the senate.

At length our house was rebuilt, and afforded us a more commodious and pleasanter habitation.

The arrangement of my father's library was our first occupation. The walls of his study were furnished with the best works, bound in the French style. He had the finest quarto editions of the writers of ancient Rome, from the Dutch press. His collection of books on Roman antiquities, and of choice works on jurisprudence, was no less valuable. The best Italian poets likewise adorned this library. My father had a predilection altogether peculiar for Tasso\*. The most esteemed modern travels

\* This predilection of Goëthe's father for Tasso undoubtedly contributed to inspire our author with a similar partiality for that great poet, whom he afterwards made the hero of one of his most celebrated dramatic pieces. Thus we are chiefly indebted to a sentiment of filial piety for this work.

likewise formed part of our collection : and lastly, it contained the necessary aid of vocabularies and good dictionaries in various languages. My father took great pains to procure new books, which he had bound, and then classed them with great precision. His choice was guided by the recommendation of good literary journals. His collection of dissertations on points of jurisprudence was yearly augmented by the addition of several volumes. He had gone through his first studies at the school of Coburg, then one of our most celebrated establishments. There he had attained much solid learning ; he was perfectly acquainted with several languages, and profoundly versed in the acquirements which then composed a good education. On leaving the college at Coburg he had studied civil law at Leipsic, and afterwards taken his degrees at Giessen. His dissertation entitled *Electa de Additione Hereditatis*, which is very elaborately written, had gained him a reputation amongst those conversant with the subject.

The prints which had formerly been dispersed about our old habitation, were disposed in a regular manner in our new one. A spare apartment near the study was decorated with them. My father collected the productions of living masters, in preference to old works. He sometimes expressed his opinion on this subject with

*much warmth.* The appreciation of the works of the old masters seemed to him subject to many prejudices. In his opinion it was with engravings as with Rhenish wine. This wine undoubtedly improves with age; yet a few years more or less make little difference in its quality. Besides, the new wine, in its turn, grows old, and quite as good as the former, if not better.

According to these notions, he for several years employed some artists of Frankfort; such as Hirt, an able landscape-painter, well-known for the truth of his touch, particularly in the representation of animals; Trauttmann, a rival of Rembrandt, celebrated for his effects of light, and pictures of conflagrations; Schutz, celebrated, like Sachtleben, for his fine drawings of the banks of the Rhine; Yunker, whose pencil immortalized flowers and fruits, and reproduced the tranquil scenes of domestic life, in the manner of the Flemish artists. My father's intimacy with a justly esteemed artist gave, at this period, a new impulse to his taste for the arts of design. This artist was Seekaz, a pupil of Brinkmann, a painter attached to the court of Darmstadt.

The rest of the house was no less carefully disposed according to the destination of its various parts: order and neatness prevailed throughout the whole. Several causes, and particularly the disposition of the windows, had contributed

to render our former dwelling gloomy. The new one was enlivened by abundance of light, assisted by large looking-glasses. My father also appeared gay, for every thing went on according to his wishes. His good-humour was never interrupted, except when the workmen were deficient in diligence and punctuality. We could not have wished for a more happy life. Every thing, abroad and at home, was favourable to us. But this mental tranquillity, so agreeable to our childhood, soon received a severe shock, occasioned by an extraordinary event. On the 1st of November, 1755, the earthquake of Lisbon took place. Terror spread throughout Europe, just when people were becoming accustomed to the sweets of peace and repose. A great and elegant capital, which was also a military port and the entrepôt of an immense trade, suddenly fell a victim to a terrific phenomenon. The earth trembles and gives way; the sea swells and overflows; ships are dashed against each other; houses are overthrown; churches and towers fall in ruins; the king's palace is partly engulfed by the sea. The earth seems to vomit flames. Fire and smoke ascend in all directions from the ruins. Sixty thousand people, who the moment before were living in peace and security, perish together in an instant; and those are the most fortunate who have not time to be sensible of their cala-

mity. The flames continue their ravages: multitudes of wretches, who were previously concealed in darkness, or bound in chains, which this dreadful event has broken, display an equally horrible fury. The miserable creatures who escape the public disaster fall a prey to robbery, murder, and every crime. Nature, in her most savage aspect, seems every where to resume and give full scope to an unbounded unrestricted power.

Signs of this phenomenon had manifested themselves at a distance, in the continental countries, before they received the dreadful news. In various places commotions slighter or stronger had been felt. Many springs, and particularly those most celebrated for their salubrity, had suddenly been dried up. These circumstances rendered the effect of the news the more terrible, when the alarming particulars became generally known, spreading as they did with great rapidity. This unheard-of misfortune became the text of serious reflections amongst men who feared God; of meditations amongst philosophers, and of sermons on the chastisements inflicted by divine vengeance amongst the ministers of religion. The general attention was long fixed on this event; the people were every where alarmed by this distant calamity, and filled with apprehensions for themselves and those who were dear to them; and these fears were



still increased by new intelligence which arrived every day and from every quarter, and which showed to how great a distance the effects of this terrible explosion had extended. Never, perhaps, since the origin of the world, did the demon of fear spread terror throughout it with greater rapidity or effect.

Young as I was, the accounts which I incessantly heard created in me no little anxiety. That God, the creator and preserver of heaven and earth, whom the first article of my faith represented as so wise and beneficent, appeared to me to have deviated from his paternal goodness in destroying the good and the wicked together. In vain did my young mind struggle against this afflicting impression; nor was it to be expected that I should overcome it, when the most enlightened men were unable to agree as to the light in which such a phenomenon was to be regarded.\*

The following summer an event happened much nearer to us, which was calculated to make us tremble at that wrath of God, of which

\* Goëthe probably alludes to the poem on the calamity of Lisbon, and the discussion to which the event and the poem gave rise between Voltaire and Rousseau, and which produced a rupture between those two great men. Rousseau answered the poet by his eloquent letter on Optimism, to which Voltaire replied by the romance of *Candide*.

the Bible so often speaks : this was a tremendous hail-storm, accompanied by thunder and lightning. A looking-glass, which had only been put up the same evening, was dashed to pieces ; the new furniture was damaged, and many handsome books and curiosities were destroyed. The terror which this accident excited in us children was increased by seeing all the inhabitants of the house, except my father, rush out of the house distractedly, and throw themselves on their knees in the dark, in hopes, no doubt, of appeasing the divine wrath by frightful cries and lamentations.

These calamities, striking as they were, did not long interrupt the course of instructions which my father was giving us. It is the general wish of all who enjoy the pleasures of the paternal character, to realize for their children the plans which they have not been able to accomplish in their own persons : they almost fancy themselves gifted with a second life destined to turn to account all the experience acquired in the first. My father, full of confidence in the variety and extent of his knowledge, certain of his perseverance, and distrusting the teachers of the day, proposed to become himself the preceptor of his children, with the exception of a few hours devoted to private masters. A sort of *pedagogic dilettantism* had already begun to manifest itself,

of which the pedantry and prejudices of those who then conducted the public schools were the principal causes. People were in hopes of succeeding better by domestic education, without considering the insufficiency of all instruction that is not given by professional people.

The plan of life which my father had laid down for himself had hitherto succeeded according to his desires. He wished me to take the same path, but was willing to render it wider and more commodious. He had a high opinion of my natural abilities, and prized them the more on account of his own deficiency in this respect. For his own attainments he was indebted to long and persevering study, and indefatigable labour. He often told me that had he possessed my faculties he should have been quite a different man, and been spared much fatigue.

By means of this facility, seconded by application, I profited by my father's lessons and those of my other masters, but without laying a solid foundation of learning in any branch of study. I was disgusted with grammar, which appeared to me a mere code of arbitrary laws. The multitude of exceptions which I was compelled to cram into my head, in opposition to all these rules, rendered them in my opinion, null and ridiculous. Had it not been for poetry, I should never have succeeded in the study of Latin;

but the harmony of verse, sounding agreeably in my ears, proved a powerful stimulus.

I comprehended with ease the turns and forms peculiar to any idiom. With the same promptitude I formed to myself a clear idea of the objects presented to my notice. No one excelled me in rhetorical exercises, although I still frequently fell into grammatical errors. My studies of this kind were, nevertheless, those with which my father was best satisfied. He often rewarded me by gifts of no inconsiderable amount for a child.

He taught my sister Cornelia Italian, in the same apartment in which I had to study Cellarius. My task was quickly ended, after which I remained quietly in my place, laying aside my book to listen to the Italian lesson. This language amused me greatly; I looked upon it as Latin in masquerade.

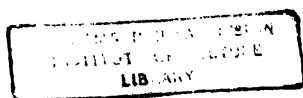
With respect to memory and facility of conception, I possessed those precocious talents for which many children have been celebrated. My father consequently proposed to anticipate the usual time of academical courses in my favour. At a very early period, he used to take pleasure in telling me that I was to study law at Leipsic, which university was his favourite. I was afterwards to take my degrees in another academy. The choice was indifferent

to him, with the exception of the university of Gottingen, for which he felt an aversion that I could never discover the cause of. He included in the plan of my studies a residence at Wetzlar, and at Ratisbon. I was to finish my education by visiting Vienna and Italy. Nevertheless he would often say that I must see Paris first, for that nothing could satisfy a traveller on returning from Italy.

At my age these prospects of travelling were extremely agreeable, particularly when my father ended his discourse with anecdotes relating to the beauty of Italy, and with descriptions of Naples. In these conversations my father's habitual gravity always relaxed; they awakened his sensibility, and inspired us with a passionate desire to visit that earthly paradise ourselves.

The use of private lessons was gradually more extensively adopted. Other children in the neighbourhood participated in those which I received. From this common instruction I derived little benefit. The masters proceeded in their usual routine, and the stupidity and perverseness of my companions in study, produced nothing but trouble, vexation, and confusion, in the hours thus devoted to superficial learning. The abridged methods by which instruction is facilitated, and varied at the same time, had not then reached us. What interest could we

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take in *Cornelius Nepos*, that dry author to children?—in the lessons on the New Testament, which had become too easy, and almost appeared trivial to us, familiarized as we were with the book by means of our religious education? Accordingly, the reading of the German poets excited in us a kind of rage for rhymes and verses. These poetical exercises were my recreation after my tedious studies.

On Sundays we used to assemble, my companions and I, to communicate our essays to each other. But I was soon disquieted by a singular apprehension. My own poetical lucubrations, of course, always appeared to me to be the best; but I soon remarked that my companions, who often brought very wretched compositions, thought no less highly of them than I did of mine. Another circumstance which also occupied my meditations, was the self-delusion of a young scholar who was totally incapable of making verses. He used to get them composed by his master, and it is no wonder they seemed to him excellent: but he would persuade himself at last, that he had made them; and although we were so intimately acquainted, he wished to make me believe it likewise. Struck with the ridiculous folly of this conceit, I began to fear that I might possibly be my own dupe also, and appear to him as foolish as he

did in my eyes. This idea rendered me very uneasy. My judgment could not be decided by any irrefragable rule. I became discouraged. But the natural levity of my age, an internal consciousness, and the praises of my masters and relations, at length restored my confidence.

I pursued my studies with zeal. Geography, universal history, and mythology, occupied me by turns. I read Ovid's *Metamorphoses* with avidity. I studied the first book with an attention altogether peculiar. My youthful head was filled with a multitude of marvellous facts, images, and events. I was seldom idle, and I employed myself only in fixing and combining in my mind the knowledge I had acquired.

The study of these antiquities was not unattended with fatigue, nor wholly suitable to my age. A book which produced a much better effect on me was Fenelon's *Telemachus*. Notwithstanding the imperfection of the translation, I imbibed from this work sentiments of pure morality and piety. In *Robinson Crusoe*, the faithful picture of the situation of a man reduced to lead a solitary life for a long period, fixed my attention with equal force. I never could have fancied that there is no such place as the Isle of Felsenburg. I found in Lord Anson's voyages the merit and interest of truth combined with all the charms of the marvellous, such as they might

have been invented by the most fertile imagination. We traversed, in idea, the whole world with that great seaman. We took pleasure in tracing out his course on the globe with the finger. But I had soon a harvest of another kind in hand.

The warehouse, or rather manufactory of the books which afterwards became so celebrated, under the title of *Contes Bleus*, was at Frankfort. As there was an immense demand for these books, they were printed from plates which were preserved, but on very bad paper, and in almost illegible characters. It was a great happiness to us to be able to exchange a few pieces of coin daily at a book-stall for those inestimable relics of the middle ages. It was, however, impossible for us to feel their actual interest: but that did not prevent our being delighted with the book of *Facetiæ*, the *Quatre-fils Aimon*, the *Fair Melusine*, the *Fair Maguelonne*, the *Emperor Octavian*, *Fortunatus*, and the *Wandering Jew*.

Whilst we were thus devoting the spring time of our lives to such amusing occupations, we were suddenly threatened by the approach of an epidemic distemper; it was the small-pox. Several persons who had been inoculated having been attacked by this dreadful disorder, people still hesitated to adopt that preventive, and the



disease accordingly ravaged the city. I was not spared. My illness was long, but I had the good fortune to escape, and without being disfigured.

This illness was succeeded by another of a different description. The public misfortunes, which had made a strong impression upon me, and the accidents to which I had myself been a victim, strengthened my inclination to melancholy. I then reflected on the necessity of supporting inevitable evils with constancy, and I felt myself filled with ardent admiration of those stoical virtues which the precepts of Christian resignation, so conformable to the lessons of the Portico, rendered still more admirable in my eyes.

This period of sufferings reminds me of our successive losses of a brother and several sisters, who died almost in infancy. At length the eldest of my sisters and myself were the only survivors of the whole family. Our attachment to each other was increased by this circumstance.

After these illnesses other vexatious events ensued, which we found doubly painful. My father, who seemed to have limited himself to a certain fixed period for the completion of our education, and to have resolved not to exceed it, exerted himself to make us regain all the time we had lost, by doubling our lessons. I easily

acquitted myself of this new task. But this increase of labour retarded the developement of my physical and moral faculties, and perhaps even forced them back in some degree.

From the tribulations of our scholastic life we often took refuge with our maternal grandfather. We delighted to visit him at his fine garden, which was abundantly enriched with flowers and fruit-trees, some of the spoils of which we were allowed to carry off. My grandfather devoted all the leisure that his functions allowed him, to gardening. This venerable old man enjoyed tranquillity of mind in the highest degree. I cannot recollect a single instance of his giving way to anger or impatience. He was as regular in his attention to his tulips, hyacinths, and espaliers, as in personally superintending the registration of the deliberations and acts of the senate. From his countenance, of which time had neither impaired the serenity nor the expression of vigour, he might have been taken for King Alcinoüs, had not his great age given him a still closer resemblance to the good Laërtes.

We likewise passed many agreeable hours with my aunts, the two sisters of my mother, who in her youth often amused herself with reading, or with some of those delicate works in which ladies employ themselves. The elder of my aunts used on those occasions to take us out

walking with her, or to some entertainment. My other aunt lived in a very retired manner. She had a fine library. At her house, I remember, I first became acquainted with Homer. It was, indeed, only in a prose translation, which is strangely misplaced, under the equally misapplied title of *The Conquest of the Trojan empire*, in a collection of travels, published by Mr. Loën; to this work were added some very bad engravings, the designs of which remained fixed in my memory, and long served to remind me of the heroes of Greece and Troy under sadly deformed features. The events of the *Iliad* gave me inexpressible pleasure. I discovered but one fault in the poem, that of telling us nothing about the conquest of Troy, and stopping short at the death of Hector. My uncle, to whom I complained of this disappointment, gave me Virgil, who fully satisfied my curiosity.

It is unnecessary to mention, that a complete course of religious instruction, according to the Protestant church, formed part of our studies. But we found this merely a dry course of morality. No one thought of vivifying our souls, by enabling us to enter into the spirit of religion. None of these lessons spoke to the heart. The dryness of our mode of worship estranged many persons from the predominant church. Many sects had been formed under the denominations of

separatists, pietists, hernhutters, and methodists, who endeavoured to approach, through the mediation of Christ, nearer to the Divinity than they considered it possible to do by adopting the rites instituted for public worship.

I continually heard talk of these various opinions; every one, whether churchman or layman, siding with one party or other. The dissenters still formed the minority. These discussions, nevertheless, awakened in my mind sentiments analogous to theirs. I conceived the idea of immediate communication with the great God of Nature, the Creator and Preserver of heaven and earth, in whose infinite goodness I had forgotten the signs of his wrath. The method I adopted was somewhat singular.

My attention had been particularly fixed on our first article of faith. God, in intimate union with nature, which he cherishes as his work, appeared to me to be undoubtedly the same God who is pleased to maintain habitual relations with man. In fact, why should not this Omnipotent Being interest himself in our proceedings as well as in the motion of the stars which regulates the order of days and seasons, as well as in the care of plants and animals? Several passages of the gospel contain positive expressions on this subject. Being unable to form an idea of the Supreme Being, I sought

him in his works, and resolved to erect an altar to him, after the manner of the patriarchs. Certain productions of nature were to represent the world, and a flame was to arise, figurative of the human soul ascending towards its Creator. I therefore chose the most valuable articles in the collection of natural curiosities which I had at hand. The difficulty was to arrange them in such a manner as to compose a little edifice. My father had a handsome music-desk of red lacquer, adorned with golden flowers, in form of a four-sided pyramid, with ledges to execute quartettos. This desk had not been used for some time. I took possession of it, and laid my specimens of natural history upon it in gradation, some above others, in regular and significant order. I wished to offer my first act of adoration at sun-rise. I had not yet determined on the manner in which I should produce the symbolical flame which I intended at the same time to emit a fragrant odour. At length I succeeded in securing these two conditions of my sacrifice. I had in my possession a few grains of incense. If they would not produce a flame, they might at least give light, and spread an agreeable perfume in burning. This mild light, shed by burning perfumes, expressed what passes in our minds at such a moment, even more perfectly than a flame. The sun had long risen above the horizon, but the neighbouring houses still in-

tercepted his rays. At length he rose high enough to allow me, by means of a burning glass, to light my grains of incense, scientifically arranged on a fine porcelain cup. Every thing succeeded according to my wishes. My piety was satisfied. My altar became the principal ornament of the apartment in which it stood. Others perceived in it nothing but a collection of natural curiosities, distributed with regularity and elegance: I alone knew its real intention. I wished to repeat my pious ceremony. Unluckily, when the sun appeared I had no porcelain cup at hand; I placed my grains of incense on the top of the desk: I lighted them; but I was so absorbed in my contemplations, that I did not perceive the mischief which my sacrifice had done, until it was too late to remedy it. The grains of incense, in burning, had covered the fine red lacquer, and the gold flowers, with black spots; as if the evil spirit, driven away by my prayers, had left the indelible traces of his feet on the desk. The young pontiff now found himself in sad perplexity. He succeeded in concealing the damage by means of his pile of natural curiosities; but he never afterwards had the courage to attempt to repeat his sacrifice, and he thought he saw in this accident, a warning of the danger of attempting to approach the Deity in any manner whatsoever. 97385

## CHAPTER II.

ALL that I have hitherto related belongs to that auspicious period when we enjoyed the advantages of a long peace. This happiness was nowhere more sensibly felt than in those cities, governed by their own laws, which were large enough to contain a considerable number of citizens, and were sufficiently well situated to enrich themselves by commerce. The advantages enjoyed by strangers and citizens in such places are reciprocal. The magistrates do not possess very extensive powers; and this circumstance qualifies them the better to employ their industry for the public good. Their external relations do not oblige them to enter into any ruinous enterprises or alliances.

Thus, during my childhood, had elapsed a series of years fraught with happiness to the inhabitants of Frankfort; but scarcely had I entered my seventh year, on the 28th of August, 1756, when that war broke out which became so celebrated throughout the whole world. This event had a great influence over the next seven years of my life. Frederic II. king of Prussia,

had entered Saxony, at the head of 60,000 men. Instead of sending a declaration of war to precede him, he was followed by a manifesto, which he had composed himself, as is well known, explaining the reasons which had induced him to undertake this extraordinary invasion, and justifying the measure itself. The world, which he thus invited to become not only spectators but judges of his actions, immediately divided into two parties, and our family became an image of the grand whole.

My great grandfather, as a senator of Frankfurt, had carried the crown at the election of Francis I. The Empress Maria Theresa had presented him with a gold chain and her portrait. He was accordingly a partisan of Austria, as were two of his daughters and sons-in-law. My father, whom the competitor of Francis of Lorraine, the elector of Bavaria, Charles VII., had nominated imperial counsellor, and who had taken the most lively interest in the misfortunes of that Emperor, inclined for Prussia; the rest of the members of the family participated in his sentiments. The misunderstandings too common amongst relations soon began to appear. Disputes arose, sarcasms were thrown out, a gloomy silence ensued, and afterwards the storm recommenced; even my grandfather, who, previously, had always evinced so quiet, so easy,



and pleasant a temper, now showed signs of impatience. In vain did the women attempt to extinguish the flame. After several unpleasant scenes, my father withdrew from their company. We were then at liberty to rejoice without restraint in the victories of the Prussians; of which one of my aunts, of a lively and ardent character, usually took great pleasure in informing us. All other interests yielded to this, and we passed the rest of the year in perpetual agitation. The occupation of Dresden, the King's moderation at the beginning of the war, his slow but sure progress, the victory of Lowositz, and the capture of the Saxon army, were so many triumphs to our party. The successes of our adversaries were denied or extenuated. They showed no less partiality in their hostility to the Prussians; and when we met, we behaved nearly like the Capulets and the Montagues in *Romeo and Juliet*.

I was a Prussian, or rather a Frederician, for we did not care much about Prussia; it was the personal character of her great King that captivated us. My father and I congratulated ourselves on the victories of this monarch. I amused myself in copying out the military songs made in his praise; and more particularly the satirical verses aimed at the opposite party, in which

I always took pleasure, although I sometimes could not help observing their dulness.

From childhood I had constantly dined with my grandfather on Sundays, as the eldest of his grandchildren, and his godson. This dinner had always seemed to me the most agreeable hour of the whole week. But, at the period of which I am speaking, I had lost all relish for it. I was condemned to hear nothing but invectives against my hero. The wind that blew in that quarter was unfavourable to me. This opposition diminished my affection, and even my respect, for my grandfather. I durst not speak in his presence. I therefore abandoned him to his prejudices, as my mother advised me to do. This circumstance threw a new light upon some of my ideas. The earthquake at Lisbon had made me, at six years of age, entertain doubts of the goodness of God; and the occurrences of the period of which I am now speaking, so far as they related to Frederick II., led me to doubt the justice of the public. I was naturally disposed to respect virtue; nothing but my venerable grandfather's opinion on the great events of that time could have shaken my faith in his merit. Unfortunately it had been the practice of those who had given us precepts of good conduct and morality, to recommend them less on account of their own intrinsic value, than as the means of gaining the esteem of others.

What would the public say? was incessantly repeated to us. I was thus accustomed to consider the public as constantly just, and an infallible judge of the value of men and things. I now saw the contrary. The most distinguished merit, with which all ought to have been equally struck, became an object of contempt and hatred to the opposite party. Those who could not deny the performance of great actions, eagerly endeavoured to misrepresent them: and who was the object of this crying injustice? The man of all others the most elevated above his contemporaries!—the hero who every day gave new and indisputable proofs of his genius! Nor was this injustice confined to the multitude: people of distinguished rank and talents, amongst whom I was obliged to include my grandfather and uncles, were equally guilty. At that age, I had no idea of the spirit of party. I thought my opinion right, and saw no reason to conceal it. I had no objection to the praises of Maria Theresa's beauty, fortitude, and other good qualities; I did not even blame her husband for his inordinate love of jewels and money; but I thought there was no harm in ridiculing the tardiness and indecision of Marshal Daun.

When I reflect on these circumstances, I perceive in them the origin of that indifference, I may say that contempt, for the judgment of the

public, which I was long inclined to entertain; a moral disorder, of which it was many years before experience and reflection could accomplish the cure. It must, however, be allowed that party injustice was not only disagreeable but injurious to me, by estranging me from those I most esteemed and loved.

Important events, rapidly succeeding each other, kept up our anxiety and attention; and thus we passed our time in annoying one another, up to the period when the occupation of Frankfort by the French furnished the inhabitants with more substantial vexations.

Fears were entertained that our countries would shortly become the theatre of war. We were kept at home; but our friends endeavoured to relieve the *ennui* of our confinement, as it might be called, by various amusements and occupations. The puppets which our grandmother had bequeathed to us were once more brought into play. This childish theatre engaged almost all our attention; but we wanted spectators. We were accordingly allowed to invite several of the neighbours' children to partake in our amusements. We next wanted an author: I therefore composed several little pieces, which obtained the applause of our public. We sometimes represented the party disputes of the day. These scenes of mimic discord frequently ended in

At the same time the savage brutality of some of my fellow-pupils, who had conceived an aversion for me, sometimes drove me almost mad.

It was not, however, their buffetings that gave me most concern : I could repel force by force. But I did not feel the same power to defend myself against the attacks of their tongues ; and I found that in such cases the defendant is under disadvantages. An instance of this kind, which I will venture to add, will exemplify the vexations inherent in man's relations with his fellow-men. For these inconveniences are inseparable from social life ; and our susceptibility frequently errs in attributing them to a personal fatality. If the knowledge of this truth does not protect us from the evil, it at least teaches us how to endure it.

Amongst the advantages for which I was envied by those of my companions who were ill-disposed towards me, the respectability which my grandfather's elevated functions reflected on his family was not the least.

I was one day boasting of having seen him sitting in the senate, under the emperor's portrait, and on a raised arm-chair which might have passed for a throne. " You were no doubt equally proud," said one of my companions in a sneering tone, " when your paternal grandfather presided over his *table d'hôte* at the public-house

he kept." I answered, that I was far from being ashamed of the relation he mentioned : the best privilege of our native city, in my opinion, was the equality of its citizens, all of whom were respectable in their professions so long as they exercised them with honour. My only regret, I continued, was that this worthy man had long been dead : had it been otherwise, I would have sought out his tomb, and paid him the homage of an inscription on it, in token of my respect for his memory. The boy whom I addressed, and his companion, now whispered to each other ; after which they looked at me with an air of derision. My blood began to boil. I challenged them to speak aloud : " Since you must know it," said one of them, " it is said that you might seek a long time before you would find your grandfather." I insisted, with violent threats, on their explaining themselves more clearly. They then told me a tale which they pretended to have heard from their relations. My father, according to them, was the son of a man of high birth. The honest landlord of the inn at Weidenhoff had no claim to the paternal character which he had assumed ; our wealth came solely from our grandmother ; our other relations were without fortune. Whilst they told me this story, they held themselves in readiness to take to

flight on my first motion; but I listened to them more calmly than they had expected, and answered them with much phlegm, that if they had thought to vex me they had deceived themselves: life was so great an advantage, that we ought not to be very fastidious as to the person we had received it from;—after all, it was the gift of God, in whose sight we were all equal. As they had nothing to say in reply, our altercation ended there; and a game at play, a medium of conciliation much employed by children, soon banished all memory of this quarrel, and of those which had preceded it.

The result, however, of all these schoolboy disputes was, that our common lessons became less frequent, and at length ceased entirely. Thus I was once more confined to my father's house; where I found, in my sister Cornelia, scarcely one year younger than myself, a companion who daily grew more amiable.

The discourse of my fellow-pupils occasionally recurred to my mind. These recollections gradually developed in me the germ of a kind of moral infirmity. I was not displeased to imagine myself the son of a man of high birth, even supposing my descent illegitimate. My reflections involuntarily reverted to the few data that my memory could furnish on this subject. The more I combined them, the more they seem-

ed to me to bear the stamp of probability. Our paternal grandfather was very seldom mentioned in my presence; but I had seen his portrait, together with that of my grandmother, in an apartment in our old house: it was still preserved in an upper chamber of our new habitation. My grandmother on my father's side must have been a very beautiful woman. I also well remembered having long been used to see at our house the miniature of a handsome man in regimentals, decorated with a star and cross. This miniature had disappeared, with many other petty articles, in the confusion occasioned by the rebuilding of our house. I combined all these circumstances with many more in my little head, and thus made an early essay in romantic composition.

I could confide the subject which engaged my attention to no one. Every question which could have the most indirect reference to it was interdicted. All that I could do, therefore, was to endeavour to approach the truth as nearly as possible by secret researches. I had heard that children often resembled their father and grandfather. Several persons with whom I was acquainted (amongst others Schneider the counsellor, who was intimate at my father's) kept up a communication with the neighbouring princes and lords, who often honoured their faithful agents with presents of their portraits. I found



at the counsellor's the portrait of the person whose miniature had so forcibly struck me when a child. I examined it attentively, endeavouring to discover in it some resemblance to my father or myself. I often thought I had succeeded, and acquired the conviction I so ardently desired ; sometimes founding the relationship on my father's nose, and sometimes on my own eyes. These illusions, however, were not sufficiently strong to remove all my uncertainty. But although I was afterwards obliged to consign all that had been told me respecting my paternal grandfather to the regions of fiction, I never could entirely efface the impression it had made from my mind ; so true it is, that whatever tends to draw us from obscurity, even at the expense of our real dignity, easily seduces us by flattering our vanity.

But away with painful reflections ; let me rather look back to those days so long since fled. Where is the man who can faithfully depict that fulness of life which is the characteristic of childhood ? With what satisfaction, and even admiration, do we contemplate these little creatures as they play about us ! Most of them, indeed, promise more than they will perform ; as if nature, amongst the illusions with which she amuses us, had particularly intended to present us with a fleeting image of perfection. A child's

organs are so wonderfully adapted to their momentary destination—he applies them to his purposes and occasions with equal simplicity and adroitness. Within the circle of his faculties, his understanding, his reason, seem perfect. When we see him so flexible, so full of dexterity, so contented, we are almost tempted to imagine that these natural gifts stand in no need of cultivation. If the progress of children were always answerable to the expectations they excite, almost every one of them would be a genius. But the effect of age is far from being confined to the mere developement of the primitive faculties. Not only developement, but revolution and confusion in our organic system, must take place before we attain the state of manhood. At the end of a certain period, scarcely are there any traces to be discerned of several of those early inclinations which, in the first instance, fixed our attention.

Thus, even supposing that the natural faculties of man impress on him a determinate direction, this would not render it the less difficult for even the most skilful observer to prognosticate that direction with certainty: but at a later period, when we recall the past, we may discover traces of the promises it afforded with respect to the future. My intention, therefore, is not to relate every thing I did or experienced

in my childhood, but to look back to that period in search of the circumstances which, although I took no particular notice of them at the time, determined the direction I have pursued in life.

In the year 1757, although we remained undisturbed in our city, our imaginations were kept in constant activity: perhaps that year was more fertile in events than any other during the war. Victories, great actions, reverses, losses and recoveries of fortune, rapidly succeeded each other. But Frederick's noble countenance, his name, his glory, still shone in the first rank. The enthusiasm of his admirers and the hatred of his enemies constantly kept increasing; and this opposition of opinions, which sowed division in families, contributed more and more to estrange the citizens from each other, separated as they already were by other interests. It will readily be conceived that in a city like Frankfort, the inhabitants of which were divided by three different religions into three unequal masses, and where a few men only, even amongst the principal citizens, were qualified for the management of public business, many proprietors and persons of information were likely to withdraw from society, and to seek in study and the indulgence of their taste an independent and retired life. Thus my father, on his return from his travels, wishing to reconcile his taste with his wish to be use-

ful to his native city, had conceived the scheme of undertaking a subaltern employment to which no emolument was attached, provided it were conferred on him without his hazarding the risks of an election. According to his views, his ideas of himself, and his consciousness of zeal, he thought he deserved this distinction; but it was not authorized either by law or custom. His wish was not acceded to, and he resented the refusal. He swore that he would never accept any place; and to deprive himself even of the power of doing so, he got himself nominated privy-counsellor to the Emperor—a title borne as honorary by the pretor and the elder senators. This title placed him above his equals, and rendered it impossible for him to accept any inferior office. The same motive induced him to marry the eldest daughter of the pretor; a marriage which excluded him from the senate. Thus was Mr. Goëthe placed in the class of passive citizens devoted to a retired life, who kept up little intercourse amongst themselves, or with the rest of society. For the more people observe that solitude increases the asperities of the character, the more attached to it they become. My father's travels and experience of the world had inspired him with a taste for a more elegant and liberal style of living than his fellow-citizens were accustomed to; and he accordingly con-

nected himself with men of similar inclinations. There was, amongst others, Mr. Offenbach, a distinguished musical amateur, and an agreeable singer; Baron Hackel, a connoisseur in pictures, engravings, and antiquities, of which he possessed an ample collection; Mr. Loën, known in the literary world by his romance entitled *The Count de Rivera*, and still more by a graver work published under the title of *One only true Religion*. The object of this book was to persuade the Christian communions, and particularly the Lutherans and Calvinists, to adopt a system of reciprocal toleration. It involved the author in a vexatious contest with the theologians. Frederick, thinking he perceived in him a man exempt from prejudices, and a partisan of the philosophical opinions then fashionable in France, gave him a presidency at Lingen; but it was said that Mr. Loën was far from being highly gratified by the favour. Lingen was, in fact, a much less agreeable residence than Frankfort. My father blamed him for having allowed himself to be drawn within the sphere of Frederick. He cited the example of Voltaire, who was so singularly rewarded by his pupil in poetry.\*

\* Every one knows the manner in which Frederick caused Serjeant Freytag to demand the return of his poems by Voltaire, whilst the latter resided at Frankfort.—ED.

To this list of my father's friends I must add those of Dr. Orth, an excellent man; Mr. Ochsenstein, the eldest of the three brothers of that name; Messrs. Senkenberg, and Mr. Moser.

A far more illustrious name, that of Klopstock, already exercised its all-powerful influence over us, although from a distance.

My father's library had hitherto introduced to my knowledge only those of the national poets who had acquired celebrity in his time: Canitz, Hagedorn, Drollinger, Gellert, Kreutz, and Haller, were arranged on his shelves in beautiful French bindings. From my childhood I had read their poems over and over again; and I had learnt by heart a great number of fragments of them. My remembrance of these works was often applied to for the amusement of company. But all these poets had written in rhyme; and rhyme, in my father's opinion, was indispensable to poetry. The appearance of Klopstock's Messiah was therefore a period of annoyance to Mr. Goëthe. He could not comprehend how verses, which, as he thought, were no verses at all, should attract the admiration of the public! He would not purchase the poem himself; but he could not prevent our good friend counsellor Schneider from lending it to my mother, and my mother lent it to her children.

Mr. Schneider, absorbed in his business, did

not read much. But when the Messiah appeared, it made a deep impression on him. Its expression of pious sensibility, at once so natural and so noble, its enchanting style, even regarding it only as harmonious prose, had so gained the not very sensitive heart of this man of business, that he considered the first ten cantos—and we are now speaking only of this first part of the poem—as the most magnificent of poetical creations. Every year, during Holy Week, which he devoted to relaxation from business, he read over his cherished poem in solitude; and this perusal was a meal which satisfied him for the rest of the year. He at first flattered himself with the hope of inducing his old friend to share his admiration; but he was much astonished to find in my father an invincible antipathy to this beautiful work, on account of a matter of form which appeared to him (Schneider) wholly indifferent. It will readily be imagined that he did not own himself vanquished, but returned to the charge several times: but the discussion sometimes degenerated into somewhat warm disputes; so that honest Schneider, to avoid losing at once an old friend and a good dinner on Sundays, decided on abandoning the cause of Klopstock.

But as the making of proselytes is a desire by which all men are actuated, how great was the secret satisfaction which indemnified our worthy

friend, when he found that all the rest of the family participated in his enthusiasm. The copy, which he used only during one week, was at our service all the rest of the year. My mother kept it concealed; but whenever my sister and I could find it, we got hold of it in our play-hours, read it by ourselves, and tried to engrave its finest passages on our memory. When we were walking, we used to recite Porcia's dream: we learned the dialogue, animated by the savage energy of despair, between Satan and Adramelech, precipitated into a sea of flame. The character of the former, as the most violent, was assigned to me: my sister assumed the other, in which the expression of resentment was somewhat softened by that of complaint and sorrow. We exchanged these frightful and sonorous maledictions, and seized every opportunity of saluting each other in this diabolical language.

One Saturday evening my father was undergoing the operation of shaving by candlelight, in order to be ready early on Sunday morning to proceed to church. We were sitting in a closet behind his apartment. Whilst the barber was at work, we were muttering our customary maledictions; at length we came to the part where Adramelech seizes Satan with an iron hand: my sister grasped my arm violently, and



uttered in a low tone, but with gradually increasing animation, the following words:—

“Come to my aid, if thou canst; I beg, I intreat. It is thou whom I implore, reprobate, black wretch! come to my assistance. I am suffering the vengeful punishment of an eternal death. Why could I not first hate thee with a mortal hatred? What can I now do? To what a state of misery am I reduced!”

So far all went on peaceably; but she now exclaimed with a loud voice and terrific expression,

“Oh! what excruciating tortures I endure!”

At these words the poor barber, affrighted, let fall the lather into my father's bosom. All the house was in motion to learn the cause of this outcry, which might have cost Mr. Goëthe a wound, if the barber had had his razor in his hand at that moment. To avoid all suspicion, we were obliged to confess the secret of our infernal drama. It is unnecessary to add, that the unlucky hexameters which had caused this accident were again accursed and condemned. Thus do children, like the populace, often turn the grand and sublime into subjects of ridicule and buffoonery. How was it possible for us, at our age, to keep up with the elevation of the author we were reading?

## CHAPTER III.

It was the beginning of the new year—a day on which the general bustle occasioned by the customary visits of congratulation set the whole city in motion. To us children this day always afforded a pleasure long and eagerly wished for at our grandfather's house, where we used to assemble by break of day, to hear a concert performed by all the musicians belonging to the town, the military bands, and all who had any pretensions to handle flute, clarionet, or hautboy. We were entrusted to distribute new-year's gifts to the people of the ground story: the number of receivers and the crowd of visitors hourly increased. Relations and confidential persons came first; functionaries and people in subordinate situations next; and even the members of the senate would not fail to pay their respects to their pretor. A select party used to sup in the evening in a dining-room, which was scarcely ever opened again during the remainder of the year. We were particularly delighted, as will easily be believed, with the tarts, biscuits, macaroons, and sweet wines distributed on the occasion. In

short, on this anniversary we enjoyed, on a small scale, every thing that is usual in the celebration of more pompous festivals.

The first day of the year 1759, no less ardently wished for than its predecessors, brought us our usual gratifications; but it was a day of uneasiness and evil omen to the inhabitants of Frankfort. They were accustomed to the passage of the French troops; numerous bodies were frequently seen to pass; but their numbers, and the frequency of their appearance, had increased during the last few days of the year expired. According to the practice adopted in the imperial cities, the guard of the principal tower used to sound the trumpet every time any troops appeared. On New Year's-day he sounded it almost incessantly; a certain sign that a strong corps-d'armée was moving on several points. Accordingly, the same day, several numerous masses of troops directed their march towards the city: the people thronged to see them pass through it. They were accustomed to see them march in small detachments; but on this day the detachments continually increased in strength, the city being unwilling or unable to prevent it. At length, on the 2d of January, a column advanced by Saxenhausen, over the bridge; halted; made the officer commanding the post prisoner; occupied it themselves; and after a feeble resistance, took possession likewise of the grand

guard-house. A peaceful town was thus, in a moment, converted into a place of war; and the troops bivouacuated in the streets until quarters could be prepared for them.

This unexpected burthen, which had been unknown in Frankfort for many years, pressed heavily on the citizens; but no one felt it a greater hardship than my father. To receive foreign soldiers as inmates of his scarcely-finished house; to abandon to them his drawing-room, so beautifully embellished, and almost always kept shut up; to see all that he took so much pains to arrange and keep in order, given up to the caprice of an armed guest: he, a partisan of the Prussians, to find himself besieged in his own apartments by the French—what could possibly be more distressing to him, according to his opinions and peculiar feelings? He might easily have bent to circumstances; he spoke French well, and was extremely capable of behaving with dignified politeness; he might thus have spared himself as well as us, many uneasy hours: for a *Lieutenant de Roi*,\* was quartered on us, whose functions, although he was a soldier, constituted him judge of all differences between the troops and the citizens, and of all civil cases between the people belonging to the army. This was the count de Thorane, of

\* A Deputy Governor.—Ed.

the town of Grasse, in Provence. His face was long, thin, and much disfigured by the small pox; he had a serious look; his eyes were black and sparkling; his manners were dignified. His behaviour on his arrival augured favourably for the master of the house. Hearing an apartment ornamented with pictures mentioned, he immediately requested the favour of a peep at them, although by candlelight. He appeared charmed with them, and warmly expressed his satisfaction to my father, who accompanied him; and finding that the artists by whom several of them had been painted lived at Frankfort, or in the neighbourhood, he expressed a wish to become acquainted with them, and to give them some commissions.

But the intimacy which this similarity of taste in the arts seemed adapted to produce, could neither alter my father's prepossessions, nor induce him to put a little constraint on his temper. He suffered what he could not prevent, but constantly kept out of the way, thus depriving himself of all influence; and finding insupportable annoyance even in the most trifling particulars of all that was passing around him.

The conduct of the count de Thorane was nevertheless irreproachable. He did not even permit his map to be fixed against the wall, for fear of damaging the hangings. His people

were quiet, and behaved well. It is true that during the whole day and even part of the night there was not a moment's peace or rest in his apartment : complainants incessantly arrived ; persons arrested were continually brought in, or taken away. The house was perpetually filled with officers, for, to add to our vexations, the count kept open table. From the constant bustle and hum the place resembled a beehive ; and although every thing proceeded in an orderly manner, the effect of all this traffic in a house which was but of moderate size, and contrived for the accommodation of a single family only, may easily be conceived.

Fortunately, a worthy interpreter stepped in as the medium of conciliation between the master of the house, constantly irritated and disposed to complain, and his guest, whose heart was full of kindness, but whose behaviour was almost always regulated by the strictest gravity. This interpreter was a townsman of Frankfort, a fine-looking good-humoured man, who spoke French fluently, knew well how to yield to circumstances, and went on smoothly without regarding petty disagreeables. My mother had requested him to apologize to the count for her husband's behaviour. He performed this task with wonderful success, attributing Mr. Goëthe's distant manners to his natural taste for retire-

ment, and the occupation of his time in the instruction of his children. The count, whose pride it was to prove himself guided by severe and incorruptible justice in performing the duties of his situation, wished also to set an example of civility to his hosts. During a whole year that he resided with us, he never once failed in this respect.

My mother had a tolerable knowledge of the Italian language ; she now resolved to learn French. She had stood godmother to one of the interpreter's children, who was thus led to our house by two motives. He lived opposite us, and was very ready to employ his leisure hours in teaching my mother, and particularly in furnishing her with such phrases as she was likely to have frequent occasion to exchange with the count : this succeeded admirably. M. de Thorane was flattered by the pains which the mistress of the house took to please him. He was a sensible man, and accustomed to the gallant manners of his nation. An intercourse of good will and politeness was accordingly established between him and my mother, of which she and the interpreter frequently availed themselves to obtain favours.

Had it been possible to reconcile my father to the situation in which he stood, its unpleasantness would have been scarcely perceptible.

The disinterestedness of the count was extreme ; he refused even the advantages attached to his rank. The most trifling presents appeared to him to be an attempt to corrupt him : and such endeavours excited his anger, and sometimes even drew down punishment on the offenders. His people had express orders never to accept of any thing from his hosts. On the contrary, we children were invited to partake of the dainties with which his table was supplied. To give an idea of the ignorance and sobriety which then prevailed in Frankfort, it may suffice to mention, that my mother scolded us well on seeing us about to eat an ice which the count had sent us. She threw it out at the window, being unable to conceive the possibility of digesting ice, however it might be sugared.

Besides the pleasure these little windfalls afforded us, we enjoyed that of being less punctually called to our lessons, and of living under a less severe discipline. When my father was in an ill humour, he could not put the least constraint upon himself. How often did he declare to my mother, the interpreter, the senators, and all his friends, his extreme impatience to get rid of the count ! In vain was it represented to him that the presence of such a guest was, under the circumstances, a most fortunate thing ; that if the count should remove, there would be



a perpetual succession of less agreeable guests, officers, or others. Mr. Goëthe was deaf to all arguments. The grievance of the moment rendered him insensible to all future grievances.

These vexations diminished his activity, which had previously been chiefly directed to our improvement. He no longer required so much of us; we therefore thought of nothing but gratifying our curiosity as much as possible, both at home and abroad, with exercises, military reviews, and every thing which excited it.

Most of the disputes brought before the tribunal of the *Lieutenant de Roi*, were extremely interesting to us. His decisions bore a stamp peculiar to himself; he always gave them in a manner which shewed good sense, wit, and acuteness. His orders were strict, and his manner of giving them was singular. He seemed to have taken the Duke of Ossuna for his model. Not a day passed but the interpreter had to entertain my mother and us with some anecdote of this kind. This worthy man preserved in his memory a little collection of decisions made by the count in the manner of Solomon. Unluckily, I have now but a vague recollection of them.

By degrees we began to comprehend the original character of M. de Thorane. He was not ignorant of his own singularities. He was sub-

ject to fits of passion, and hypochondriac attacks, or, as people said, to the visits of an evil spirit. These fits sometimes lasted whole days; he then withdrew into his inner apartment, and was visible only to his valet, and would allow no one to disturb him, even on urgent business. But as soon as the evil genius had left him, he appeared again with his usual mildness, serenity, and activity. The hints dropped by Saint Jean, his valet de chambre, led us to surmise that some great misfortune had formerly happened to him, and that to avoid discovering the anguish he sometimes endured from his reflections, to the eyes of the world, he thought it best to withdraw from all observation. A few days after his arrival, he sent for the Frankfort painters who had been mentioned to him: Hirt, Schutz, Trautmann, Nothnagel, and Yunker; of whom he purchased several pictures which they brought for him to look at. My little turret, which was well-lighted, was immediately converted into a cabinet of pictures and a painting-room. The count took pleasure in keeping these artists constantly occupied, particularly Seekaz of Darmstadt. He sent to Grasse for all the pictures with which his rooms were adorned, covered our walls with them, and desired our painters to copy the finest of them in oil. The work was commenced with spirit. Seekaz was employed

on the rural scenery. He excelled in painting old men and children from nature; but was less successful in his representations of young men, which were thought too thin. His female figures were chargeable with the opposite defect. His wife was short, stout, and far from agreeable in person; she never allowed him to paint from any other model than herself, which restriction did not contribute to the beauty of his productions; on the contrary, it led him to make all his figures much too bulky. There was truth in his landscape, but his foliage was rather scanty. He was, as I have already mentioned, a pupil of Brinkmann, whose easel pictures are far from contemptible. Schütz had the art of animating the Rhenish landscape with the rays of summer suns. Trautmann, who painted subjects from the New Testament in the manner of Rembrandt, set villages and rustic buildings on fire with his colouring. Hirt's pencil was exercised on woods of oak and beech. Yunker, who usually imitated the Flemish finishing, scarcely felt himself capable of undertaking these tapestry compositions. However, by the help of a handsome reward, he was induced to embellish several of them with flowers and fruits.

I had been acquainted with these artists from childhood; and accustomed to frequent their painting-rooms. The count admitted me into

his apartments, and thus I attended the painters when they were at work. I often took the liberty of giving my opinion on their sketches. I was already celebrated amongst amateurs for pointing out the subject of a picture at the first glance; and it was difficult to meet with a better interpreter of allegories than myself. I had frequently suggested ideas to the artists. I took a real pleasure at that time in priding myself on my faculties. I remember dividing the history of Joseph into twelve pictures, the subjects of which I described, and some of them were executed. Amidst all these occupations, which were honourable to a boy, I must confess, to my shame, a little event which happened to me in this circle of artists. With the eagerness of a child, I wished to see and examine every thing that was brought into my turret. One day I perceived behind the stove a little black case, and raised the lid without hesitation, when the count suddenly entered. "Who gave you leave to open that case?" said he, in his tone of *Lieutenant de Roi*. I could make no answer. He then pronounced my punishment with a very serious air, "You shall not enter this room for a week," said he; I bowed, and withdrew. I obeyed so punctually that it vexed poor Seekaz, who was at work there, and was always glad to see me. I used to carry him his coffee, but I now only

placed it on a shelf near the stairs; he was, therefore, obliged to leave his work in order to come and take it, and this almost put him in an ill humour with me.

I habituated myself to speak the French language in some way or other without having learnt it. I must explain the method I adopted for this purpose. I have already mentioned that I found it extremely easy to acquire the sonorous part of a language, rhythm, accent, intonation, and all that may be said to form its exterior. This natural faculty now proved very useful to me. The Latin language enabled me to recognize a number of words; and the Italian still more. In a short time I had so often heard the servants, soldiers, and sentinels speak, that, without being as yet able to take a part in conversation, I ventured occasionally to put questions and give answers in French; but what chiefly accelerated my progress was the theatre. My grandfather had given me a ticket which secured my admission, and I daily made use of it, contrary to my father's inclination, but with the consent of my mother. I used to station myself in the pit of this foreign theatre: I attended chiefly to the action of the piece, the dramatic expression, and the pantomime, for as I understood little or nothing of what was said, I could only be amused with the gestures and delivery

of the performers. It was in comedy that I was least able to seize the meaning of the words. The actors spoke too fast, and talked of familiar things, the names of which were unknown to me. They seldom played tragedy, which I understood much better, owing to its measured diction, Alexandrine rhythm, and elevated style, expressive of more general subjects. I soon possessed myself of a Racine, which I found in my father's library. I began to declaim different parts in the stage manner, as well as my ear would permit. I performed this with great animation, although I could not master the sense of a whole speech. I got several pieces by rote, which I recited almost like a parrot; I had already learnt in the same manner many passages of the Bible, of which I scarcely understood a word, and nevertheless I often repeated them in the tone of a protestant preacher.

I soon wanted to go behind the scenes. An opportunity speedily occurred. I had not always patience to hear the piece out, and I often sauntered about in the corridors or before the door, where I amused myself with children of my own age. A lively handsome boy, who belonged to the company, joined our sports. I had seen him play several little parts. With some difficulty I made him understand my bad French. He had no companion, either in the theatre or in the

neighbourhood, who spoke his language, and hence he became the more attached to me. We used to meet out of the hours of representation, and even during that time he seldom left me to myself. His delightful prattle was inexhaustible. He had always an endless store of adventures and anecdotes at command. My progress with him was rapid; I learned more in our conversations in one month, than I should otherwise have learnt in a year. Nobody could comprehend how I had been initiated suddenly, and by inspiration, as it were, into the mysteries of a foreign language.

At the very commencement of our acquaintance he took me behind the scenes. He introduced me to the green-room, where the actors and actresses remained between the acts. The place was not convenient. It was a concert-room, which had been converted into a theatre, and which contained no dressing-rooms for the actors. Another room, tolerably large, intended for play, served as their green-room. Both sexes were almost always intermixed there. They changed their clothes before each other with as little ceremony as before us children, and not always with the most scrupulous decency. I had never before seen any such proceedings; but I soon became accustomed to them, and thought nothing of them.

My new connexion soon produced me another of more lively and particular interest. Young De Rônes (such was the name of my little actor) was a lad of agreeable manners and good morals, his habit of romancing always excepted. He introduced me to his sister, who was two years older than ourselves; she was a tall well-made girl, with an agreeable countenance, regular features, brown complexion, and black eyes and hair. There was a remarkable calmness, and a tinge of melancholy in her air. I used all my endeavours to please her, but I could not attract her attention. Girls think they are very superior to boys younger than themselves; and, whilst they ogle young men, they assume a maternal tone towards children. We often met at their lodgings, whilst their mother was at rehearsal, or in company. I never went without flowers, fruit, or some other trifle, to present to my adorable. She always received my present very graciously, and thanked me with much politeness. But the cloud of sadness which obscured her face never dispersed; nor had I ever reason to imagine she had thought of me. At length I fancied I had discovered the secret cause of her melancholy. De Rônes one day shewed me a portrait in crayons, adorned with elegant silk curtains, behind his mother's bed. It represented a handsome man. "That," said



he, with an arch look, "is not exactly papa; but it is nearly all the same." He then began to praise the original of the portrait in the highest terms, telling me a number of wonderful stories in his way. From all his rhodomontade I concluded that his sister was a legitimate daughter, and that he belonged to the friend of the family. This explained the young woman's unhappiness, and increased my affection for her.

My regard for her aided me to endure the follies of her brother, which were sometimes quite extravagant. He already pretended to bravery, and was continually boasting of his exploits. According to his account he had frequently fought, but had always avoided wounding his adversary. He fought only for honour: at one perilous moment he had made the sword fly out of his opponent's hand, and lodged it in a tree.

My ticket gave me free admission to every part of the house. According to the custom which then prevailed in France, the part of the stage before the curtain was extremely deep, and was furnished on both sides with benches separated from the stage by a low railing. The rows of benches were raised one above another, and the first row was not very high. These were the places of honour, usually occupied by the officers, although the proximity of the actors destroyed,

I will not say all illusion, but all pleasure. I have witnessed this arrangement of the stage, or rather this ridiculous custom, of which Voltaire so often complained. When the house was full, and there were officers looking in vain for honourable seats which were all occupied, another row of benches and chairs was brought on the stage before the curtain, and sometimes to the back of the stage. In the narrow space which was thus left to the heroes and heroines, they had no choice but to disclose all their secrets to the crosses and uniforms by which they were surrounded. In such a predicament have I seen poor Hypermnestra, and many other princesses.

I must mention another singular custom, which to me, as a good German attached to the proprieties of the drama, could not fail to appear extremely revolting. The theatre was in some degree considered as sacred: it would have been the greatest offence to the majesty of the public to permit the slightest disturbance there. Whenever, therefore, a comedy was performed, two armed grenadiers stood in sight of the spectators on the two sides of the stage, beyond the curtain. Thus they witnessed all that passed behind the scenes. As the curtain was not let down between the acts, two other grenadiers were seen to come from the side scenes, whilst the orchestra was playing, and place themselves

before the former two, who then marched off in ordinary time. Was not this admirably calculated to destroy every thing like what is theatrically called illusion? Must it not have appeared the more revolting, at a period when the principles and works of Diderot were recalling nature in all her truth to the stage, and when the most perfect illusion was represented as the essential object of the dramatic art? Tragedy, however, was exempt from these police regulations. The heroes of antiquity were allowed the privilege of guarding themselves. But there were still grenadiers at hand, behind the side scenes. It was then that I saw Diderot's *Père de Famille* and Palissot's *Philosophes* represented. I still remember the figure of the philosopher walking on all-fours and eating his lettuce.

The varied pleasures of the drama could not, however, always retain us in the theatre. When the weather was fine, we used to amuse ourselves by playing before the door or in the neighbourhood. Our boisterous play corresponded ill with our appearance, particularly on Sundays and holidays; for we were all constantly well dressed, with our hats under our arms, and swords by our sides, the hilts of which were adorned with large silken ribands. One day when we were amusing ourselves as usual, De Rônes, who had joined

us, took it into his head that I had offended him, and owed him satisfaction. Although I could not comprehend this whim of his, I acceded to his demand, and prepared to tilt; but he stopped me, saying that we had better seek a more retired spot, where we might fight without interruption. We therefore withdrew to another place, and put ourselves in posture. The duel began nearly in the theatrical manner. We crossed swords and exchanged thrusts. But, in the heat of action, the point of his sword passed through the knot of riband attached to the guard of mine. He immediately declared that he was satisfied, embraced me with a truly theatrical air, and we repaired together to a neighbouring coffee-house, where a pitcher of milk calmed our minds, and made us better friends than ever.

Ever since the commencement of the military occupation of our city, we children had had no trouble but the daily task of choosing our amusements: the theatre, dances, parades, and reviews, by turns attracted our attention. The last-mentioned diversion was that which we preferred. Nothing seemed to us more amusing or gay than the life of a soldier.

The residence of the *lieutenant de roi* in our house gave us an opportunity of seeing the most distinguished personages of the French army, and of making our observations on the chiefs

whom report had already made known to us by name. On the staircase or in the gallery we could very conveniently see the general officers pass by us. The Prince de Soubise was a fine looking man. I have a still better recollection of Marshal Broglie, who was a middle-sized young man, but well-made and lively, with a keen eye and a resolute countenance.

He paid several visits to the Count de Thorane. It was easy to guess that the subject of their deliberations must be of importance. In fact, we had scarcely been accustomed to our new situation three months, when report began to whisper the march of the allies. It was said that the Duke of Brunswick was directing his march on the Maine, to drive the French from that river. The latter had not then distinguished themselves by any remarkable exploit: they had not excited a high opinion of their valour; and indeed, since the battle of Rosbach, people considered themselves justified in thinking very lightly of them. Duke Ferdinand, on the contrary, inspired the greatest confidence, and the Prussian party impatiently awaited the moment of their deliverance from their adversaries. My father was pretty tranquil, but my mother was very uneasy. She had sagacity enough to foresee that the petty vexations of the moment might be succeeded by much greater calamities: for it

was easy to perceive that the intention of the French was not to go and meet the enemy, but to wait for him at a short distance from the city. The defeat and flight of the French army, its resistance in the town to cover a retreat, and keep possession of the bridge over the Maine—bombardment, pillage, and all the chances of war—now occurred to the timid, and excited alarm in both parties. My mother, who could not bear these apprehensions, mentioned them to our guest, by means of the interpreter. She received the customary answer in such cases—that she need not be alarmed, that there was nothing to fear, and that she must not say a word on the subject to any one.

Great numbers of troops marched through the city. It was found that they had taken position at Bergen. Horsemen and foot soldiers were now continually coming and going, with still increasing activity. Our house was day and night the centre of a tumultuous bustle. At this period I frequently saw Marshal Broglie. He was always calm: neither his countenance nor his actions betrayed the least agitation of mind. I was afterwards much gratified on finding that a man, who had excited in me so high an opinion of his character, had obtained a distinguished name in history.

This tumult was soon succeeded by a pro-

found quiet, which was only the forerunner of the storm. The children were forbidden to leave the house. My father, being unable to remain quiet, went out. The battle began. I got on the top of the house. I could not see the field, but I distinctly heard the cannonade and musquetry. A few hours after, we saw the first results of the battle. A file of waggons, laden with poor wounded creatures, expressing their sufferings by their cries and gestures, passed before our eyes. This spectacle excited the compassion of the inhabitants. Beer, bread, wine, and money, were eagerly offered to those who were still in a state to receive succour. But when the Germans who were wounded and taken prisoners began to arrive, the sensibility of the inhabitants seemed unbounded. One would have thought they were ready to deprive themselves of all they possessed, to relieve their unfortunate countrymen.

The great number of German prisoners was an ill omen for the allies. My father, too confident in the superiority of the party he was favourable to, was impatient to go and meet those whom he already regarded as the victors. He first went to his garden by the Friedberg gate: all was solitary and quiet there. He ventured as far as the meadows of Bornheim: there he fell in with some dispersed skirmishers, who

were firing musquetry near the barrier. The balls whistled about the ears of the inquisitive intruder, who deemed it expedient to beat a retreat. On questioning persons who were passing and repassing, he ascertained what he might have presumed from the retiring of the cannonade—that the French were victorious, and that their retreat was not now to be expected. He came home in despair. At the sight of the wounded and prisoners he lost all command of himself. He ordered assistance to be given to those who were passing—but only to the Germans, which was not always possible, fortune having, for the moment, mingled friends and enemies without distinction in promiscuous heaps.

My mother, my sister, and I were already cheered by the consolatory expressions of the Count de Thorane, and the day had appeared to us less painful. We soon began to resume our usual good-humour. My mother had another source of confidence. She had consulted a fortune-teller in the morning, whose answer had been encouraging, both with respect to the present and the future. We were anxious to inspire my father with the same confidence. We did all we could to dissipate his melancholy. He had taken no sustenance all day : we pressed him to eat ; but he was deaf to all our entrea-



ties. *He withdrew to his own apartment : we, nevertheless, gave ourselves up to the joy of seeing the affair decided. M. de Thorane, contrary to his usual custom, had been on horse-back the whole of the day : he returned. His presence was more necessary than ever. We ran to meet him ; we kissed his hands, loudly expressing our joy. This reception seemed to give him great pleasure : he ordered some preserves and sweet wines to be given to us, desired his people to regale us well, and proceeded to his drawing-room amidst a multitude of petitioners who accompanied him.*

A magnificent collation was set before us. My father's absence distressed us ; we entreated my mother to call him. She, however, knew better than we did, how far from agreeable to him this little entertainment would be. She had, however, taken care to have something got ready for supper, and would gladly have sent part of it to him in his room. But in no case would my father have suffered this violation of rules. My mother, therefore, had the collation removed, and went to ask him to come down into the dining-room, which he consented to do, although reluctantly. Little did we foresee the misfortune about to ensue from our request. From the top of the house to the bottom, the staircase communicated with all the

antechambers. *It was, therefore, impossible for my father to avoid being seen as he passed by the Count's apartments in coming down. The antechamber was so full, that, to dispatch the business of those, who were waiting with the greater expedition, M. de Thorane had stationed himself in it, and was there at the moment when my father came down stairs. The Count advanced towards him, saluted him, and said—“It was highly desirable, both for you and us, that this perilous affair should end so happily.”—“Happily!” replied my father angrily. “Would to God they had sent you all to the devil, even if I had gone with you for company!” The Count stood for a moment disconcerted, and then cried out in a violent passion,—“Such an insult to the good cause, and to myself, shall not remain unpunished!”*

In the mean time my father had gone down into the dining-room. He took his place amongst us, appeared more at his ease than before, and began to eat. We were delighted to see him more calm, little suspecting in what manner he had given vent to the feelings that oppressed his heart. Soon afterwards my mother was called out of the room. We then tried to entertain my father with an account of the collation with which M. de Thorane had treated us. But my mother did not return. At length the

interpreter came in. On a sign which he made, we were sent to bed. It was after a good night's sleep that we heard, next morning, of the calamity with which we had been menaced the preceding evening. The Count had immediately given orders to conduct my father to prison. His people well knew that his commands were not to be disputed; but they also remembered that he had several times been obliged by their delaying the execution of them. This the worthy interpreter, whose presence of mind never deserted him, warmly represented to them. It was he who had sent for my mother. He had placed her under the protection of an officer, in order that she might, in case of necessity, obtain at least a delay of the execution of the order, by her representations and entreaties. He himself immediately went to the Count, who, after giving his orders, had retired into his apartment. He had thought it preferable to abandon for a moment all attention even to the most urgent affairs, to running the risk of venting his ill-humour on some innocent person, or giving some decision that might have injured his character in his own estimation.

The honest interpreter used so often to repeat his conference with the Count to us, that I can still give an accurate account of it.

He had ventured to open the door of the

closet and to go in, notwithstanding the express and severe prohibition of all such freedoms.

“What do you want?” cried the Count in a passion. “Begone! No one but Saint Jean has a right to enter here.—Suppose for a moment that I were St. Jean?—A fine idea! I had rather see two such as he than one like you: withdraw.—M. le Comte, heaven has endowed you with a quality which is not common; and to that quality it is that I appeal.—You think to gain me over by flattery: you will not succeed.—Yes, M. le Comte, you are endowed with an uncommon quality; for you can listen to what one has to say to you, even in a moment of anger.—Well, well; I have listened too long to what has been said to me. I now know how we are liked here, and what well-wishers we have in these townspeople.—Not all.—Too many by far. What would these citizens of an imperial town have? They saw their emperor elected and crowned; and when he is unjustly attacked, and in danger of losing his states, and seeing them invaded by an usurper—when, luckily for him, he finds faithful allies who sacrifice their money and their blood for him—they will not endure the slightest burden, even for their own interest, and are unwilling to have their enemy beaten.—You have long been acquainted with their opinions,

“ and have wisely tolerated them. Besides,  
“ those who think thus are the less numerous  
“ party. You know it is a small minority  
“ only who allow themselves to be dazzled by  
“ the brilliant qualities of the enemy—who even  
“ admire him as an extraordinary man.—Yes;  
“ I have long known it, and suffered it: other-  
“ wise this man here would never have dared on  
“ such an occasion to insult me in this manner  
“ to my face. Whatever may be the number of  
“ these malevolent persons, it is time they should  
“ be punished in the person of their rash inter-  
“ preter; it will be a lesson for them.—Grant  
“ only a little delay.—In some cases one can-  
“ not proceed too rapidly.—Only a short delay.  
“ —Do you think to lead me into a false step,  
“ my good fellow? You will be disappointed.—  
“ I neither wish to lead you into, nor prevent  
“ you from committing one. You have the right  
“ to punish, as a Frenchman, as *lieutenant de roi*;  
“ but do not forget, at the same time, that you  
“ are the Count de Thorane.—Who has nothing  
“ further to hear or say.—Yet he ought to listen  
“ to an honest man.—What more can the honest  
“ man have to say?—*M. lieutenant de roi*, this is  
“ what he has to say: You have long tolerated the  
“ ill-will of persons who offered you no offence.  
“ This one has grievously offended you. Tri-  
“ umph over your resentment: every one will

“ applaud and esteem you the more for it.—  
“ You well know that I frequently tolerate your  
“ jests; but do not abuse my indulgence. Are  
“ these people absolutely blind? What would  
“ be their situation at this moment, if we had lost  
“ the battle? We should have fought at the  
“ gates of the town; we should have maintained  
“ ourselves in it to cover our retreat. Do you  
“ think the enemy would have had their hands  
“ in their pockets? that they would not have  
“ made use of every means in their power  
“ to set your houses on fire? What would this  
“ citizen have? Does he want a shell to fall in  
“ this room, the hangings of which I have taken  
“ care of, and would not even allow my maps to  
“ be affixed to? They ought to have been all  
“ day praying for us.—Many of them were so.—  
“ They should have invoked the blessing of  
“ heaven on our arms; gone out to meet our ge-  
“ neral and his officers, with crowns in their  
“ hands, and carried refreshments to the troops.  
“ Instead of such conduct, this accursed spirit of  
“ party has just poisoned the best, the happiest  
“ moment of my life, purchased with so many  
“ cares and fatigues.—It is an act of party spirit.  
“ The punishment of this man will only increase  
“ it. Those who are of his way of thinking will  
“ set up the cry of tyranny and barbarity. They  
“ will look upon him as a martyr suffering for the

“ good cause. Those of the opposite party who  
“ are now his adversaries will then regard him  
“ only as a fellow-citizen, will pity him; and  
“ whilst they acknowledge our right to punish,  
“ they will accuse us of rigour.—I have had the  
“ patience to listen to you for a long time: will  
“ you leave me to myself? —One word more. Re-  
“ collect that any misfortune that may happen to  
“ this man or his family will appear revolting.  
“ The master of the house has given you cause  
“ to consider him as malevolent; but his wife  
“ has done her utmost to anticipate all your  
“ wishes. His children have behaved to you as  
“ a beloved relation. Will you destroy for ever  
“ the peace and happiness of this family by  
“ punishing the head of it? A shell bursting  
“ in the house would certainly not have pro-  
“ duced a greater calamity. M. le Comte, I  
“ have often admired your moderation: give me  
“ another opportunity of doing honour to it. It  
“ is glorious for a warrior to act in the house of  
“ an enemy, as the friend of the family: and here  
“ it is not an enemy that you have to do with,  
“ but a misled man. Conquer your resentment;  
“ it will be an immortal honour to you.—That  
“ would be truly admirable,” answered the Count,  
laughing.—“ It is the simple truth,” replied the  
interpreter. “ I have not sent the mother and  
“ her children to throw themselves at your feet:

“ I know that such scenes are annoying to you ;  
“ but represent to yourself the gratitude they  
“ must feel. Figure to yourself this family che-  
“ rishing throughout life the remembrance of the  
“ day of the battle of Bergen, and relating the  
“ story of your magnanimity on each succeeding  
“ anniversary, teaching it to their children and  
“ grandchildren, and endeavouring to impart,  
“ even to strangers, their own sentiments of at-  
“ tachment to you.—Mr. Interpreter, what you  
“ say does not affect me. I do not think of pos-  
“ terity ; it will belong to others, not to me. But  
“ to fulfil with punctuality my duty for the time  
“ being, and to preserve my honour with vigilant  
“ care, these are the objects that engage my at-  
“ tention. We have talked too long on this bu-  
“ siness: withdraw ; and go and receive the  
“ thanks of the ungrateful man, whom I forgive.”

The worthy interpreter was so much surprised and affected by this unhopèd-for conclusion, that he could not refrain from tears. He attempted to kiss the Count's hands. But the latter, instantly drawing back, said in a grave and severe tone—“ You know I dislike such ceremonies.” And he immediately passed into the antechamber, to hear the demands of the crowd that waited for him. Thus ended this day of alarm. The next morning we feasted on the remnants of the fine dessert of the preceding evening, in celebration



of the happy result of a dangerous event, from the anxieties of which we had been saved by a propitious sleep.

Whether our friend the interpreter really was so eloquent, or whether his imagination thus embellished the scene between the Count and himself, as often happens in the relation of a good and noble action, I never had an opportunity of deciding : all that I can with certainty affirm is, that he always related it to us in this manner without variation. This day was in his estimation the most painful, but at the same time the most glorious, of his life.

After these anxious and afflicting occurrences, we soon resumed our usual tranquillity, and that easy humour which looks not beyond the present hour, and is the usual inheritance of youth. My passionate attachment to the French theatre constantly increased. I never missed a single representation, although when I came home at night I was often obliged to put up with some remnants of supper, and had to endure my father's reproaches. In his opinion the theatre was a frivolous amusement, which could never do me any good. I answered him with all the arguments of the friends of the drama : that poetical justice restores the equilibrium between triumphant vice and unhappy virtue, &c. I

quoted the finest examples of the punishment of the guilty ; I appealed with animation to "Miss Sarah Sampson," and "The London Merchant." I passed slightly over "The Cheats of Scapin," and similar pieces ; thus eluding the objection which is drawn from the bad effect of a public apology for the tricks of roguish valets and the follies of hair-brained youths. Each of us retained his former opinion, as disputants generally do. But my father was soon reconciled to the theatre on perceiving my rapid progress in the French language.

We are all naturally inclined to try to do what we have seen others do, without consulting our own capacity. I had rapidly run through almost the whole circle of the French dramatic pieces : from the noblest tragedies to the lightest comedies, I had skimmed over the whole. When a child I had ventured to imitate Terence : now that I was a youth I did not lose so fine an opportunity of attempting to imitate the French poets. Dramatic pieces, half mythological and half allegorical, in the style of Piron, were then fashionable. These productions, which had some affinity with parodies, were much relished. To me they were highly attractive. I was pleased with the gilt wings and the sprightliness of Mercury, the thunder of Jupiter and the beauty of a Da-

naë, or some other fair one—shepherdess, perhaps, or huntress—taming some great divinity. The subjects that ran in my head were taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, or Pomey's *Mythological Pantheon*. I soon invented the plan of an affair of this kind ; of which all I can now say is, that plenty of kings' daughters, princes, and divinities figured in my pastoral.

When I had made a fair copy of my dramatic composition with great pains, I read it to my friend De Rônes, who heard it with an air of benevolent condescension. He glanced over my manuscript, pointed out a few errors in the language, and some passages too lengthy, and finally promised to examine it attentively. I asked him, in a timid tone, whether he thought it possible that it might be performed. He gave me hopes of it. He had many friends in the theatre, he said, and he would support me with all his power. But secrecy was indispensable. A piece which he had composed, and which was ready to be played, had been laid aside the moment he had been suspected to be the author. I promised silence, and already fancied I saw the title of my piece in large characters in the bills posted at the corners of the streets and squares.

With all his levity, he did not lose so fine an opportunity of playing the pedagogue, a charac-

ter he was very fond of. He read my piece with attention; and when we again met, in order to make, as he said, a few slight alterations, he pulled it to pieces for me so unmercifully, that he did not leave one stone upon another from the beginning to the end. He struck out some passages, added others, suppressed this character, introduced that; and, in short, exercised so rigid a censorship over my poor piece that he made my hair stand on end. Being fully persuaded of his capacity, I let him do as he pleased. He had constantly in his mouth the rule of the three unities, the regularity of the French theatre, probability, the harmony of verse, and all the rest of it. I had implicit faith in his information. He laughed at the English and German theatres. In short, he continually repeated to me that litany of dramatists which has been dinned in my ears throughout my life.

I carried off the unlucky offspring of my brain in scraps. All my efforts to restore it to life were made in vain. Being, however, unwilling to sacrifice it entirely, I made some alterations in my work. I then had it copied, and presented it to my father; who was so much pleased with it, that for some time he allowed me to eat my supper in peace.

This unfortunate attempt had rendered me extremely pensive. I determined to investigate the

origin of these theories, these rules so incessantly appealed to, and respecting which the harshness and pedantry of my Mentor had awakened my doubts. I began with Corneille's Treatise on the Three Unities. I easily comprehended these rules; but the reasons of them did not appear so clear to me. I was still more embarrassed when I read the observations on the *Cid*, and the prefaces in which Corneille and Racine defend their compositions against the critics, and even against the public. What appeared to me most unequivocal was, that the disputants did not understand each other. I had studied Racine with particular attention; I had even played the part of Nero in *Britannicus*, when the performance of that piece was attempted by us and other children under the direction of the senator Olenschlager. What was I to think on finding that a piece like the *Cid*, that magnificent creation of genius, had been condemned by order of an all-powerful minister?—that Racine, that demigod of the French stage, who had also become a divinity to me, was unable in his lifetime to satisfy either the many amateurs or the few competent judges. All these contradictions embarrassed me excessively. I long puzzled myself with endeavouring to reconcile all the difficulties of this pedantic theory. Wearied at length with these fruitless efforts, I gave up the whole sys-

tem. I was particularly led to adopt this resolution by my conviction that the authors of the finest works, when they began to enter into dissertations upon them, to elucidate their conceptions, and to explain and defend them, did not always understand themselves. I returned to feed on the effects of the theatre: I frequented it more assiduously than ever. I read the poets regularly, and meditated on what I read. I then studied more profoundly the whole of Racine's and Molière's works, and the best of those of Corneille.

The Count de Thorane still resided at our house. There was no alteration in his manners, especially with regard to us; but although he still shewed the same inflexible regard to justice and the strict performance of his duty, he no longer exercised his functions with the same serenity as formerly. His zeal had diminished. His manners and deportment, which were rather Spanish than French; his eccentricities, which would occasionally appear even in business; his inflexibility, and his attachment to the prerogatives of his place, could not fail to embroil him occasionally with his superiors. It was no doubt owing to some of his peculiarities of temper that he got into a quarrel at the theatre, the result of which was a duel, in which he was wounded. It was thought very unbecoming for the head of the

*police himself thus to set an example of violating the laws.* All these circumstances together had the effect of estranging him more than ever from society, and of sometimes weakening his natural energy.

In the mean time the painters whom he employed had finished their work. He conceived the idea of setting them to execute pictures, in which each of them was to employ his peculiar talent: one was to paint the men, another the women, a third the children, and a fourth the landscape; and all this on the same canvass:—a whimsical plan, the only effect of which was to render the artists dissatisfied, and to excite emulations amongst them which were on the point of producing lasting animosities.

My father still sighed for the moment of M. de Thorane's departure. Nothing remained to attach the Count to our house, after he had sent away his pictures to his own country, and he was himself desirous to change his residence. They parted politely. The Count soon afterwards left the city. We were informed that he was successively appointed to several situations, often against his own wishes. He sent some original pictures to Frankfort, to have copies made by the masters before mentioned. At length we ceased to hear of him. Long afterwards we were informed that he died in a French colony in America, of which he was governor.

## CHAPTER IV.

AFTER the Count's departure every thing at our house returned into its accustomed routine. We resumed the course of our studies, and my father wished us to compensate for lost time by extraordinary exertions. Our hours were divided between drawing, music, and the study of languages. Mr. Goëthe held it as a principle, that the most certain way to bring young scholars forward was to become a scholar amongst them. He had never learnt to draw. He now commenced drawing with indefatigable ardour, and his perseverance and rapid progress excited our emulation. We commenced the study of music with equal eagerness. Our harpsichord master had the whimsical custom of giving ridiculous names to the fingers and keys. The amusement this buffoonery afforded us rendered our apprenticeship easy to us. We were also attended by an English master, who flattered himself that he could teach that language in a month's lessons. We studied successfully during the prescribed month. I took it into my head to reduce my exercises into the form of a



*correspondence amongst young students travelling in different countries, and sending each other accounts of their travels and labours. I had introduced into this little romance a ridiculous personage speaking the jargon of the German Jews. This suggested to me the necessity of ascending to pure Hebrew; and my father, entering into my ideas, sent me to take lessons in Hebrew of a Doctor Albert, rector of our Gymnasium; a singular old man, who never read any thing but Lucian and the Bible. I availed myself of my Hebrew course to clear up, with the assistance of my pedagogue, the difficulties that occurred to me in the Old Testament. I freely expressed my doubts to him; he laughed at them, and furnished me with the means of satisfying myself. For this purpose I derived great assistance from a German translation of an English Bible, with a well-written explanation of the most important and difficult passages. The translators, after stating the various opinions, endeavoured to reconcile them in such a manner as to preserve at the same time the respect due to these sacred books, the foundations of religion, and the principles of reason. This work, even more esteemed than the original English, was of the greatest service to me, and effectually contributed to settle my ideas on religion.*

*This study of the sacred books, concentrated*

on one single point all my scattered acquirements—all the powers of my understanding and judgment. I am unable to describe the sensation of internal peace which I experienced, when I could penetrate into the profound meaning of these wondrous writings. When my too active imagination led me astray—when fable and history, mythology and religion, mingling in my mind, left my ideas confused—I took refuge in those ancient Oriental countries; I plunged into the first books of Moses: and amongst those races of shepherds who peopled Asia, I found at once the charms of the deepest solitude, when my fancy wandered in the wilderness; and those of the most agreeable and sweetest society, when I imagined myself beneath the tents of the patriarchs.

The history of these ancient families, before it is lost in that of the people of Israel, attracts our parting observations to a single figure of the most fascinating aspect, particularly to the hopeful buoyancy and smiling imagination of youth. How powerful is the interest attached to Joseph, the child of the most passionate love, born in wedlock! He always appears to us calm and mild—even when, animated for the first time with the prophetic spirit, he announces the superiority he is destined to obtain over his own family. Precipitated into adversity by his

brethren, he preserves his fortitude and his virtue in slavery, resists the most dangerous seductions, and owes his safety only to his profound wisdom. His merit and services raise him to the highest honours. He preserves an immense empire, and becomes the saviour of his own family. Equal to his ancestor Abraham in his confidence in God and his greatness of mind, he is also the rival of his grandfather Isaac in mildness and benevolence! He exercises the active industry which characterizes his father, in a grand and noble manner. It is not the care of flocks, the multiplication of cattle for his father-in-law or himself, that engage his attention; but the government of nations, with all their possessions, on behalf of a powerful king. The recital, full of nature and pathos, appears too short; and one feels tempted to develope and describe all the circumstances of the story.

These biblical pictures, characters, and events, the grand features of which are so strikingly sketched in the Holy Scriptures, were familiar to the German public. The personages of the Old and New Testaments had assumed, under Klopstock's pen, that character of tenderness and sensibility, with which his contemporaries were so strongly affected. The poem of Noah, by Bodmer, made little or no impression on me ;

but I felt a very lively emotion on reading Moser's poem, the subject of which is Daniel in the lions' den.

I had long felt a strong inclination to write the history of Joseph; but I did not know in what form to treat it. I was by no means capable of a style of versification suitable to such a subject; I therefore adopted a poetical kind of prose as more easy; and I began the work with ardour. I endeavoured to mark and depict the characters. I wished the developement of the incidents and episodes to give this simple recital the form of a substantial work of some extent. I forgot what young people always forget—that such a work requires a character, for the comprehension and representation of which experience is indispensably necessary.

At length I brought my biblico-poetical romance to a close. What a performance for a youth scarcely beyond the age of childhood! I had it neatly copied by a young man who acted as my father's secretary, with the addition of all my little poetical compositions that appeared to me to merit preservation. The whole formed a handsome quarto volume; which, after procuring it the honour of an elaborate binding, I presented to my father. He received it kindly, and made me promise to present him

a similar volume every year. Mr. Goëthe considered this as a matter of course, these works being the fruit of my leisure hours.

I continued my theological, or rather biblical studies, attending and analyzing some sermons preached by a protestant minister, which formed, together, a kind of course of Religion.

It was a principle with my father that every thing that was begun must be finished, however disgusting, tedious, troublesome, or even useless the results might be. One might have imagined that he thought there was only one object in life—namely, the accomplishment of a design formed ; and that he considered perseverance as the only virtue. Whatever book was once commenced during our winter evenings, we were compelled to read to the end. Thus we read Bower's History of the Popes, dry as it is for children. Notwithstanding all the *ennui* that these dull annals occasioned us, I was long afterwards capable of giving a pretty clear account of them.

Amongst all these studies, the utility of most of which was at least equivocal, my father never lost sight of his principal object : he was constantly bent on making me an able lawyer ; and it was now necessary to endeavour to furnish my head with the *Corpus Juris*.

The military habits amidst which we had

lived several years, and the reading of histories and romances, had taught us that there are many occasions on which the laws are silent, and where their impotence leaves us no resource but in our personal abilities. We had attained the age at which boys are taught to fence and ride, to enable them to provide for their own safety. There were two fencing-masters in the town: one was a grave elderly German, who taught the art according to the old school; the other a Frenchman, whose science consisted in the rapidity of his motions, and in thrusts made by stealth, and lightly, which he always accompanied with a cry. Each of these rivals had his partisans. The little society with which I studied, favoured the Frenchman. We therefore soon learned to advance, to fall back, to thrust, to recover; and all with the customary shout. Many of our acquaintance took lessons of the German fencing-master, whose manner was totally different. This opposition on so important a point, and the exclusive confidence which every one reposed in his favourite master, excited dissensions amongst the young folks; and the fencing-room had nearly become the scene of real battles. Their disputes took up as much time as their fencing; and, to put an end to them, a match took place between the two masters. The German, firm as a rock in

his position, made his passes, and, fencing away in tierce and carte, disarmed his adversary. The latter insisted that this was of no consequence, and, continuing the contest, put his antagonist out of breath by the rapidity of his motions. At last he made a thrust at him, which would certainly have sent him to the other world, had they been in earnest.

My progress in riding was not great. The pedantic manner in which this noble art was taught was particularly disgusting to me. The riding-house was muddy: an infectious odour exhaled around it. They always gave me the worst horse. The duller of my hours were, therefore, those passed in an exercise which, in itself, appeared to me very agreeable. I had conceived such an aversion to the riding-house, that, ever afterwards, if I happened to be walking near it, I took great care to avoid it. It may be observed, that our apprenticeship to any art is often made painful and revolting in the extreme by the mismanagement of our teachers. To avoid this evil, it has latterly become a maxim in education, that study of every kind cannot be rendered too easy or agreeable to youth; and from this maxim evils probably no less serious than the former have resulted.

Nearly at the same period, I also engaged in the study of the principles of physics and me-

chanics. The history of the antiquities of our city likewise attracted my most serious attention. I was particularly partial to those middle ages, when a man could freely display the native energies of his character.

With the keen appetite for research which I then possessed, I could not but feel much curiosity on the subject of the present state of the Jews. They inhabited a particular quarter, or rather street, at Frankfort, for their quarter did not extend beyond the street. It had formerly been enclosed like cloisters, between the ditches and walls of the town. The narrow confines of this place, its offensive odour, the noise and confusion that prevailed in it, the melancholy accent of a rude and disagreeable language, all contributed to produce an impression of disgust, even on merely looking towards that quarter, in passing by it to reach the city gate. It was long before I durst venture into the Jews' street. The ancient stories of their cruelties towards the children of the Christians, related in so terrific a manner in Godefroy's Chronicles, recurred to my mind. Although a better opinion of them prevailed in modern times, the satirical paintings which were still to be seen on the walls of the bridge-tower, were not adapted to prepossess people in their favour. It was very evident that these works originated not in



the malice of a private enemy, but in the resentment of the public.

The Jews were nevertheless the chosen people of God ; and the living witnesses of the authenticity of the ancient traditions. They were active men, forward to render themselves useful and agreeable. It was impossible not to admire the perseverance they displayed in their attachment to their ancient laws. Their daughters were handsome and remarkably graceful : they were flattered when a young Christian would accompany them on a Saturday in their walks, and behave attentively and kindly to them. I was eager to become acquainted with the ceremonies of their religion. I had no rest until I had attended their schools, and been present at a marriage, and a circumcision. I was every where well received, kindly treated, and pressed to come again.

Whilst in my capacity of a young citizen of a great city I thus alternately amused myself with the various objects that interested me, our domestic repose and security were sometimes disturbed by unpleasant occurrences. Sometimes a fire, sometimes great crimes, followed by the punishment of the guilty, kept us in alarm. Several executions took place before our eyes. I particularly remember the deep impression made on my mind by the burning

of a book by the hangman. This book was the translation of a French romance of the comic kind. It contained no attack on the state; but was proscribed as dangerous to religion and good morals. There was something terrific in this execution of an inanimate thing. We never rested until we had procured a copy of it, and we were not the only persons who longed for the forbidden fruit. Had the author tried to discover a good method of promoting the circulation of his work, he could not have hit upon a better expedient.

In the mean time, I was drawn first to one part of the city and then to another by more pacific occupations. My father had early accustomed me to act as his factotum. He particularly employed me in quickening the diligence of the artists or workmen he employed. He paid well; and required every thing to be finished and delivered on the day fixed. This superintendence gave me an opportunity of getting some knowledge of most arts and trades: it likewise afforded me the means of gratifying my innate propensity to identify myself with the feelings and notions of others; and to interest myself in every thing that constitutes a mode of existence. I derived many agreeable hours from this kind of study, learning to judge of every condition of life, and to estimate the pleasures and pains, the diffi-

culties and enjoyments which each of them presented. I took a close survey of that active class which is placed between the elevated and the lower ranks of society. The latter are in fact composed of individuals who are occupied only in collecting the raw productions of nature; whilst these productions, modified by the workman, minister to the luxury and supply the enjoyments of the former. The intelligence and dexterity of the workman connects these two classes together; and by his means each obtains what he wishes for in his own way. The domestic life of every man occupied in a mechanical art, the character which his art gives him in the midst of his family, were the objects of my assiduous observations. Thus was developed and strengthened in my mind the sentiment of the equality, not of individuals, but of the different classes of human life; mere existence being its essential condition, all the rest is the effect of chance, and ought to be regarded as indifferent.

It was about this period, whilst I was engaged sometimes in the occupations which I have just mentioned, and sometimes in rural labours in a large orchard belonging to my father, that the peace of Hubersburg was completed, on the 15th of February, 1763.\*

\* Goëthe was then nearly fourteen years of age.

This event ushered in days of rejoicing and festivity; and it was under its happy auspices that I was destined to pass the greater part of my life.

Before I proceed further, let me pay due homage to several respectable individuals, to whom I was under great obligations.

I will begin with M. Olenschlager, of the family of Frauenstein, a senator, and son-in-law to Dr. Orth, whom I have already mentioned. This gentleman, in his grand costume of burgo-master, might have passed for one of the principal French prelates. Business and travel had made him a remarkable character. He showed some esteem for me, and willingly conversed with me on the subjects which interested him. I was privy to the composition of his explanation of the Golden Bull. He had the goodness to make me sensible of the object and importance of this celebrated document. I had so familiarized myself with the rude and troubled times which had provoked it, that I could not refrain from representing the characters and facts with which my friend entertained me, by imitating the tone and gestures of these men of other times, as if we had had them before our eyes. This pantomime afforded him great amusement, and he was fond of making me repeat it.

I had from infancy accustomed myself to the singular practice of learning by heart the tables

of contents prefixed to the chapters and commencements of the books I read. I had adopted this method with the Pentateuch, the *Æneid*, and the *Metamorphoses*. I continued it with the *Golden Bull*; and my good friend, Olen-schlager, laughed heartily when I unexpectedly cried out in a very grave tone: “*Omne regnum in se divisum desolabitur: nam principes ejus facti sunt socii furum.*”—“Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation: for the princes thereof are become the associates of robbers.” The worthy Olen-schlager, shaking his head, said in a significant manner: “What sort of times, then, were those in which the emperor thundered such expressions in the ears of the princes of the empire in a solemn diet?”

He saw little company, although his manners were highly agreeable, and he took great pleasure in lively conversation. He would now and then get us to perform a dramatic piece. This was considered an useful exercise for youth. We played Schlegel’s *Canute*, and afterwards ventured on *Britannicus*, both to perfect ourselves in the French language and to practise declamation. I played *Nero*, and my sister *Agrippina*. We were applauded far beyond our deserts; but we thought we received less praise than we merited.

I used also to visit Mr. Reineck, a gentleman of a very ancient noble family. He was a thin man of a very brown complexion; of the most upright character, and firm to a degree that often amounted to obstinacy. Never did I see him laugh. He had suffered a severe affliction, his daughter having eloped with a friend of the family. He commenced a prosecution against his son-in-law, which he carried on with great animosity; but the tardy formalities of the tribunals affording him no hopes of a speedy vengeance, or one agreeable to his wishes, he attacked his son-in-law personally, which measure produced action after action. From that time he kept himself shut up in his house and garden. He inhabited a spacious but dismal ground-floor, which for many years had neither been painted, nor perhaps cleaned. He seemed to place some confidence in me, and recommended his youngest son to my attention. His oldest friends, who knew how to accommodate themselves to his situation, his agents, and his counsellor, often dined with him. He never failed to invite me to these entertainments. The dinners were good; the wine still better: but a dilapidated stove, which emitted smoke on every side through its crevices, annoyed the guests excessively. One of Mr. Reineck's best friends ventured one day to mention it to him, asking

him how he could endure so great an inconvenience all the winter. "Would to God," replied he, "that that were the greatest inconvenience I had to put up with." It was long before he could be prevailed upon to see his daughter and grandson. His son-in-law never durst appear before him.

My company had a favourable effect on this worthy and unfortunate man. When in conversation he imparted to me his information respecting the world and political affairs, he seemed to forget his troubles. The few friends who used to meet at his house employed me when they wished to divert his mind from his sorrows. We prevailed on him to take a walk with us occasionally. He seemed to take pleasure in viewing once more the fields which he had not entered for many years. He talked to us about the old proprietors of them, his neighbours, related their histories, and described their characters. His judgments were always severe, but there was much wit and pleasantry in his narratives. We made some attempts to induce him to return to the society of men, but were always unsuccessful.

Another person, nearly of the same age, whom I often saw at this period, was Mr. Malapart, a wealthy man who possessed a very handsome house in the horse-market, and derived a good

revenue from his salt-works. He also lived in seclusion, passing the summer at his garden, near the Bockenheim gate, where he cultivated very fine tulips.

M. Reineck was also an amateur. Flowers were now in season. We formed a plan for bringing them together, and after having gradually paved the way for the interview, we one day took Mr. Reineck to Mr. Malapart's garden. The two old gentlemen bowed to each other, and the company walked up and down between the beds of tulips with true diplomatic gravity. The flowers were really superb; their various forms and colours, the superiority of some to others, and the rarity of several sorts, furnished matter for the conversation, which took a very friendly turn. This gave us the more pleasure as we perceived in an adjacent arbour several flaggons of old Rhenish wine, some fine fruits, and other dainties, set out on a table. Unfortunately Mr. Reineck observed a very fine tulip, the head of which hung down a little; he took hold of the stalk very carefully, and raised the flower in order to examine it more minutely. But, gently as he touched it, the owner was displeased. Mr. Malapart, very politely, but with a very determined air, and as if congratulating himself on his habitual reserve, reminded him of *oculis, non manibus*. Mr. Reineck had already let go



the flower. At these words the colour came into his cheeks, and he replied, in his usual dry, grave tone, that amateurs and connoisseurs might freely examine and handle any flower, with proper precautions, and upon this he again took hold of the flower. The mutual friends were embarrassed. They started several subjects of conversation, but unsuccessfully. The two old gentlemen appeared to be struck mute. We dreaded, every moment, that Reineck would touch the flowers again. To prevent his doing so, we took them each apart, and soon put an end to the visit, thus turning our backs on the well-furnished table which we had viewed with longing eyes, but had not been able to approach.

The privy counsellor Huisgen was another of the friends I used to visit. He was not a Frankfort man, and he professed the reformed religion ; two obstacles which hindered him from holding any public employment, and even from exercising the functions of an advocate. He nevertheless practised under the signature of another person, at Frankfort, and in the courts of the empire ; his reputation as an excellent lawyer procured him many clients. He was then sixty years of age : I used to go to his house to take lessons in writing with his son. Mr. Huisgen had a very long face, although he was not thin.

Disfigured by the small pox and the loss of an eye, he appeared frightful at the first glance. His bald head was surmounted by a white cap, tied at the top with a riband: he always wore very handsome damask or calamanco *robes de chambre*. He inhabited a small apartment on the ground-floor, the neatness of which was as perfect as the serenity of his temper. It was a treat to see the perfect order of his papers, his books, and his geographical maps. It was not long before I discovered that he was at variance, not only with the world, but with heaven also. His favourite book was Agrippa's work, *de Vanitate Scientiarum*. He advised me to read it. This book unsettled my ideas for some time. In the peaceful happiness of youth I was inclined to a kind of optimism. I had reconciled myself to heaven, or rather to the divinity. The experience I had already gained had taught me that good and evil are often balanced. I had seen that it was possible to avoid misfortune, and escape the greatest dangers. I looked with indulgence on the actions and passions of men; and what my aged Mentor observed with disapprobation, often appeared to me to merit the highest encomiums. One day when I had launched forth in praise of the divine perfections, he bent the brow of the eye he had lost, gave me a

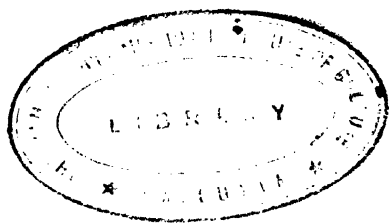
piercing look with the other, and said in a nasal tone, "Do you know that I see defects even in the Deity." I never met any person at his residence, and in the course of ten years, I do not think I ever saw him go out above once.

My conversations with these remarkable men were not fruitless. Each of them influenced me according to his peculiar manners. I listened to them with more attention than is commonly paid by children. Each of them endeavoured to bend me to his views, as a dear son, and to revive his own moral physiognomy in me. Olen-schlager wanted to make a courtier of me; Reineck, a diplomatist; both, and the latter particularly, endeavoured to dissuade me from poetry and my passion for writing. Huisgen tried to convert me into a misanthrope like himself, at the same time persuading me to endeavour to become an able lawyer. According to him, jurisprudence was a science which it was necessary to acquire, in order to be able to make use of the laws as a protection against the injustice of mankind, and in defence of the oppressed.

Such were the men whose information I sought to appropriate to myself. At the same time a few fellow-pupils, older than me, excited my emulation; amongst others the two brothers Schlosser, and Griesbach, with whom I was for many years intimately acquainted. They

were then spoken of as patterns for imitation, on account of their proficiency in the study of languages and the other exercises which open the academic career. They were considered by all who knew them as certain to make a conspicuous figure either in business or the church.

For my part I had an irresistible inclination to endeavour to distinguish myself by something extraordinary. But I knew not yet to what object I was to direct my efforts. It is not uncommon to be more ardently desirous of a noble recompense, than studious to acquire the means of deserving it. Why, then, should I deny that in my dreams of glory and happiness, the idea of the crown of laurel destined to adorn the poets' brows, was what appeared most attractive to me?



## CHAPTER V.

EVERY bird has its bait, and every man travels or wanders in a way of his own. My natural disposition, my education, the company I had kept, and my habits, all tended to fortify me against the grosser vices. I often came in contact, it is true, with the lower classes, particularly with artisans; but this intercourse did not tend to any intimate connexion. I had an ample share of boldness, and could readily have undertaken any extraordinary and even perilous enterprise, and I often felt a strong inclination to do so; but I had no opportunities of this kind.

I found myself, however, suddenly and most unexpectedly drawn into connexions which brought me to the very brink of ruin; and caused me a long series of anxieties and grief. I had continued, in youth, the connexion I formed in infancy with a fellow-pupil, already mentioned, whom I called Pylades.

Our parents were not on very good terms, and we seldom saw each other. But whenever chance brought us together, we felt all the transport of recovering long lost friends. We

met one day under the alleys of trees that form a charming walk between the inner and outer gate of Saint Gall. Scarcely had we saluted each other, when he said, "I shewed the verses you gave me lately to some friends, and they will not believe that you made them."—"Well, well," said I, "let us compose what we please, and amuse ourselves, and let others think and speak as they like."—"Here comes one of the unbelievers," said my friend.—"Let us say nothing about it," I replied. "Where would be the use of it? and what signifies his opinion." After we had exchanged a few unimportant sentences, my young friend, who was determined not to give up the point, said to the other: "This is my friend who wrote those clever verses that I shewed you, and which you would not believe he had composed."—"He ought not to take that amiss," replied his companion; "it is doing him honour to think the verses too good to have been written by one of his age."—"It will be easy to convince you," said my friend; "give him a subject, and he shall turn it into verse on the spot." I accepted the challenge; we were alone. Our sceptical companion then proposed as a theme, a declaration of love from a young maiden to a young man. He immediately gave me his tablets and a pencil, which he had in his

pocket. I sat down on a bench by myself, and began. My two companions walked about, taking care not to lose sight of me. I entered warmly into my subject, and composed the declaration, nearly in the form of a madrigal. When I read my poetical effort to them the sceptic was in raptures, and my friend seemed enchanted. The former asked me for my verses, which I could not well refuse him, particularly as I had written them on a leaf of his tablets; besides I was proud to see a proof of my talents in his hands. He left us with professions of his esteem and good will towards me, hoping that we should soon meet again. We accordingly engaged to take a walk in the country together.

This scheme was soon carried into effect, and several young friends of theirs joined us. They belonged to the middling class, or rather to the lower one; but having attended the schools they had gained some instruction, and learned a mode of behaviour that indicated some education. There are many branches of industry in a rich and extensive city. These youths worked for the advocates, and gave lessons to children of the lower classes, as the practice is in the public schools. They used to meet in the evening, particularly on Sundays and holidays, in order to take a frugal repast together.

While they praised my love-letter, they confessed that they had made use of it to play a trick. They had got it copied, and sent it to a coxcomb, who firmly believed that a young lady whom he used to ogle had fallen desperately in love with him. He was ardently desirous of the opportunity of an interview with her. They added that it would give him the greatest delight to answer her in verse. But as neither he nor they were capable of such an effort, they entreated me to write the answer myself.

Playing tricks is the amusement of the idle, and is practised with various degrees of humour. To banter a person or turn him into ridicule is a pleasure to those who can find no resources either in themselves or in the conversation of others. No period of life is entirely exempt from these follies. We had amused ourselves in our childhood with jests of this kind : I considered this as a harmless one; I consented to it. They apprised me of a few circumstances that were to form part of the letter, and I quickly composed it.

Soon afterwards my friend pressed me to sup with him and his associates. The amorous youth was to be of the party; he was resolved that nothing should prevent his paying his acknowledgments to the person who had acted as his interpreter, under the inspiration of the Muses.



We met rather late. The entertainment was very frugal; the wine drinkable: the whole of the conversation consisted in jesting at the expense of the poor lover, who was quite unsuspecting of the truth, and, on a second perusal of his letter, almost thought he had written it himself.

My good-nature did not allow me to take much pleasure in this malicious jest, the repetition of which soon disgusted me; and I made but a dull figure at this supper, when an unexpected apparition suddenly reanimated me. This was a young female of extraordinary beauty, cousin to two of the guests, and niece to the mistress of the house. She only appeared for an instant, and immediately withdrew on some errand for her aunt.

As she left the room she appeared to me still more charming. Tresses of beautiful hair formed the appropriate ornament of her lovely head: her neck, of dazzling whiteness, was exquisitely formed. She was remarkably graceful; and when the charms of her face ceased to rivet the attention, it wandered in ecstasy over her whole figure. I blamed my companions for allowing this charming girl to go out thus alone at night. My anxiety was soon calmed by her return. One of the company offered her a chair, which she accepted. I regretted that she was not placed near me; but she retired almost immediately, recommending us not to stay late, and particularly not to speak too loud, for fear of waking

her mother, as she called the mother of our host, although in fact she was only her aunt.

The countenance of this young woman remained fixed in my imagination : this was the first time a female face had made a durable impression upon me. As I could find no pretext for returning to the house, love suggested to me the idea of going to church to see her. I soon discovered where she sat : I used to gaze on her all service-time, which, however long it might be in reality, always appeared to me too short. I durst not offer her my arm, or speak to her on leaving the church : I was but too happy if I could persuade myself that she had looked at me, and when she had returned my salute. It was not, however, long before I had once more the pleasure of a nearer sight of her. The young lover had been made to believe that the letter I had written in his name had really been delivered to his mistress ; he expected an answer with the most eager impatience. My acquaintances wished me to undertake it ; and Pylades was desired to urge me to employ my utmost abilities on the occasion.

The hope of seeing her whom I loved induced me to set to work immediately. I represented to myself every thing that I thought would have delighted me in a letter written to me by Margaret (which was the name of my fair one). Inspired by the amiable and attractive expression of that dear face, full of her character, and assuming the

mode of feeling that I ascribed to her, I ardently prayed that it might not prove an illusion. The idea that I might possibly receive such a letter from her transported me with enthusiasm. Thus was I deluding myself, whilst I thought I was playing off a jest on another. This affair was to be productive both of pleasure and pain to me. I had just finished my letter when I was invited to the common repast: I promised to come, and it may be supposed that I did not make them wait for me. When I arrived I found only one of our company. Margaret was sitting at a window at work. The young man begged me to read him the letter: I consented. I read it with great emotion, sometimes fixing my eyes on the paper, and sometimes on my beloved. When I thought she appeared a little agitated, when a slight carnation appeared to suffuse her cheeks, I expressed with still more ardour and vivacity the sentiments which in my illusion I had supposed her to entertain towards me. My young auditor, who was her cousin, often interrupted me with his praises; but nevertheless suggested some alterations, when I had concluded, in several passages that were really much more applicable to Margaret than to a young lady of a very good family, rich and highly respected in the city. This young man left the room, after lending me his pencil to make the corrections he had proposed.

I sat down on a bench by the table, and near the window, occupied in the revision of my letter.

After several attempts, I cried out in an impatient tone, "This will never do!—So much "the better," said the lovely Margaret, gaily. "What are you doing there?" At the same time, leaving her work and approaching me, she began to lecture me in a very friendly and rational manner: "This," said she, "appears to you an innocent jest: it is a jest, but it is not innocent. "I have already often seen our young people "involved in serious perplexities through such "tricks. — What is to be done?" I replied: "the letter is written, and they imagine I am "correcting it.—Will you take my advice? "Decline the proposal: carry the letter home; "or tear it, and retire. You can afterwards try "to make an excuse to your friends. I have "still something more to say to you: I am only "a young girl, without fortune, and dependent "on my relations. It is true they are incapable "of doing any harm; but they are not always "very prudent in their amusements. I declined "copying the first letter, as they requested me "to do. One of them transcribed it himself, in "a disguised hand, and they intend to do the "same with this. But why should you, a "young man of a good family, rich and independent, become their instrument in a decep-

“tion from which you can have nothing to expect, but which may produce unpleasant consequences to you.” To hear her speak to me at such length, and with so much kindness, was an incomparable happiness to me. I had scarcely heard a sentence from her before. Every word she uttered increased my passion for her, and I could not refrain from saying, in the transports I felt: “I am not so independent as you imagine; and of what use would fortune be to me, if I could not obtain that which is most precious to me, the object of my most ardent wishes?”

She had drawn my poetical epistle near her. She read it softly, in a sweet and affecting tone. “It is very pretty,” said she, smiling: “what a pity it is not intended for a better purpose! —Ah!” I exclaimed, “how happy would he be who should obtain such a pledge of love from the girl he adores!—That would be difficult,” replied she, “but not impossible.—For instance,” continued I, “if any one who knows you, cherishes, and honours you, were to present to you such a letter as this, and were to press you, to entreat you with the utmost earnestness and the most tender affection, to avow it as the expression of your sentiments, what would you do?” I replaced before her the letter, which she had returned to me. She began to laugh, reflected for a moment; then took the pen and

wrote her name at the foot of the letter. I rose in a transport of joy—I wished to embrace her.—“No embraces,” said she, drawing back; “that is too common: but love me, if it be possible.” I had placed the letter in my bosom. “It is done,” cried I; “no one but myself shall have it. I owe my preservation to you.”—“Withdraw, then, quickly,” said she, “before they return.” I was unable to tear myself from her; but she entreated me to go, in an affectionate tone, tenderly pressing my hand between her own. My eyes filled with tears; I thought hers appeared moist. Bending over her hands, I pressed them to my face, and then ran out of the room. Never since have I experienced such transports, such exaltation!

First love, in early youth, and in an uncorrupted heart, penetrates the whole soul; it is all sentiment, all spirit. It seems to have been the behest of nature, that one sex should find in the other all that is beautiful and good. The sight of this girl and my love for her, disclosed to my eyes a new universe a hundred times more resplendent with beauty and perfection than the real world. I was every moment reading over my poetical epistle: I gazed incessantly on the name of Margaret written with her own hand; I kissed it, and pressed it to my bosom. My joy at having gained the love of so

charming a girl exceeded all conception; but the more my enthusiasm increased, the more painful I found it to be prevented from flying immediately to her presence, seeing and conversing with her: for I was apprehensive of the reproaches I might have to encounter from her cousin. I did not know where to meet with my friend Pylades, who alone could arrange every thing. The following Sunday I hastened to the Niederrad, where these youths were accustomed to meet, and where I joined them. I expected to find them dissatisfied and cool towards me; and was surprised to see them advance to meet me with great cordiality. The youngest, in particular, addressed me in the most friendly manner, and taking my hand, said: “ You played us a pretty trick the other day. “ We were very angry with you at the time; “ but your flight, and the disappearance of your “ poetical production, suggested a good idea to “ us, of which we might otherwise, perhaps, “ never have thought. You must give us a “ treat to day, to seal our reconciliation. We “ will explain the matter to you, and our scheme “ will not displease you.” The proposal embarrassed me not a little: I had about me, at most, enough to have treated one friend in a moderate style; but to entertain a party, and especially a party like them, who were not in the habit

of stopping short in the midst of their pleasures, was an expense quite beyond my means; and I was the more surprised at this proposal, as in all their meetings they made it a point of honour for every one to pay his share of the reckoning. They laughed at my embarrassment, and the youngest said: "Come along  
" with us into the arbour, and leave the matter  
" to us." We went and sat down accordingly, and he continued: "When you had vanished  
" with your amorous epistle," said he, "we reconsidered our plan, and perceived that we had  
" abused your talents for the sake of a bad joke,  
" the only object of which was to vex an individual, and to bring ourselves into danger;  
" whilst we might easily have employed you  
" in a manner that would have been advantageous to us all. Here, you see, I have an  
" order for an epithalamium, and another for  
" a funeral elegy. The latter allows of no delay:  
" we have eight days to complete the other.  
" You can easily accomplish these two affairs,  
" and thus enable yourself to entertain us twice;  
" and we shall remain obliged to you." This proposal suited me extremely well; for having been accustomed from infancy to compose occasional verses, I was abundantly stocked with epithalamiums. Here was an opportunity to distinguish myself; and, what gave me still more pleasure, to



see my compositions in print. I therefore readily acceded to the scheme of my young companions. They put me in possession of the requisite names and family circumstances. I sat down by myself, made a sketch of my elegy, and composed a few stanzas. I then rejoined the company: the wine was not spared; nevertheless my vein was exhausted for the time, and I could not finish my poem that evening. They told me I had until the following evening to complete it, and that the gratuity paid for the elegy was enough to afford us another amusing evening. “Do you make one of us,” added they. “Margaret will be there also: she is fairly entitled to share our feast; for, in fact, our scheme was her own suggestion.” I was delighted to hear this. As I went home, I composed in my mind my last stanzas. I committed the whole to writing before I went to bed, and the following morning I made a fair copy of my poem. The day seemed to me insupportably long; and scarcely had night commenced when I was once more by the side of my beloved, in that humble dwelling which her presence seemed to me to embellish.

The youths with whom this affair brought me into closer intimacy than before, belonged, as I have stated, to the common class. Their industry was highly laudable. It was with pleasure that I heard them talk of the various expedients

they were capable of employing for procuring a livelihood. They were very fond of mentioning individuals of known wealth, who had begun life with nothing. Some had been the humble agents of their patrons, to whom they had found means to render themselves necessary, and whose daughters, in process of time, they had married. Others had commenced as petty shopkeepers; and by dint of labour, method, and talents, had become rich merchants. Amidst all these stories, it was resolved that each of us should in turn explain the manner in which he hoped, not only to make his way in the world, but also to acquire a handsome fortune. None of them discussed the subject more seriously than Pylades. He confessed to us that he was passionately in love with a young person, and that they had exchanged vows of fidelity. The fortune of his parents did not permit him to study at the University; but he wrote a fine hand, and understood accounts and the modern languages. By the help of these resources, therefore, he meant to exert himself to obtain a happy domestic establishment as soon as possible. Margaret's cousins approved of his intentions, but not of his premature engagement with a young female; adding, that although they considered him an excellent young man, they did not think him either active or bold enough to attain a great

fortune. He endeavoured to raise himself in their opinion by explaining his proposed undertakings, the means he intended to use, and the grounds of his hopes. Every one followed his example. At last my turn came. I was to explain my plans, and to describe the pursuits in life which I intended to adopt. "To place himself on an equality with us," said Pylades, "he must set aside the advantages of his situation, and tell us what he would do, if he had, like us, no resource but in himself."

Margaret, who, up to that moment, had never laid aside her work, now quitted it, and sat down at the end of our table. We had emptied several bottles, and I found myself in very good order for composing my romance. I returned them thanks for having procured me the means of commencing business by the orders for poetry which they had brought me. I entreated them not to take amiss my aversion to all arts and professions whatever. They remembered what I had already said to them on this point, as well as respecting the kind of occupation of which I thought myself capable. Each of them had applied his talents to lucrative pursuits, and I also should direct mine towards this requisite for my establishment in the world. Hitherto Margaret had listened with great attention. She was leaning on the edge of the table, with her hands

across, resting on her arms : in this position the motions of her head sufficed to indicate her thoughts, and every sign she made was to the purpose. Whilst the rest were speaking she had now and then introduced a few words to assist them in expressing their ideas ; but when I began she became motionless, as usual. I kept my eyes fixed on her ; and it will easily be believed, that, as I developed my plan of life, the sentiments she had inspired me with, and the influence they had over all my views, could not escape her observation. My passion gave to all my expressions such an air of truth, to all my schemes such a plausible appearance, that the illusion was quite perfect to myself. I fancied myself alone and friendless, as my plan supposed, and the hopes of possessing her raised me to the summit of felicity. Pylades had concluded his scheme with his marriage ; the others were considering whether their plans should extend so far. “ Undoubtedly ! ” I exclaimed, “ must not each of us wish for a wife to manage his house, and afford him, in the peace and happiness of marriage, the advantages to which his labours have entitled him ? ” I then drew the portrait of such a woman as I wished for. Could it be any thing but an exact resemblance of Margaret ?

The gratuity given for the funeral elegy was expended ; but we now reckoned upon the good

fortune of the epithalamium. I overcame all fear and anxiety ; and I succeeded in concealing my evening engagements from my parents and all who knew me. To see the lovely object of my affection—to be with her—was now indispensably necessary to my existence. My young friends had conceived an affection for me. We were almost always together ; it seemed impossible for us to remain apart. Pylades had brought his fair one ; and this amorous couple often shared our suppers. As betrothed to each other, they did not conceal their mutual tenderness. Margaret, on the contrary, seemed studiously to keep me at a certain distance. She never allowed the least freedom : but she sat frequently by my side, particularly when I was writing or reading. She would then familiarly lay her arm on my shoulder, to read in my book or paper with me : but whenever I offered to indulge myself in the same familiarity, she would remove, nor would she return to the same place for a considerable time. But she frequently assumed this position ; for her motions and gestures were nearly uniform, but always pleasing, graceful, and appropriate to the occasion. My consolation was, that I never saw her more familiar with any other person.

One of our most innocent amusements was an excursion by water in the Hochst boat, which used to meet the Mentz boat at Hochst. We

generally joined the passengers at the *table d'hôte*. The company always varied. I once made this excursion with a cousin of Margaret's. There was a young friend of his at table, whom he presented to me. In the course of conversation, this young man appeared to me extremely well-informed on all public affairs. When we separated, the cousin solicited me to recommend his friend to some official situation. This was a novelty to me. I had never thought of putting my grandfather's kindness to the test for such a purpose, and I felt reluctant to do so. They urged the point, and I gave my promise. Accordingly on the first opportunity I presented a written request to the venerable old man. He wished to know how I came to interest myself for the petitioner. I told him that he had been strongly recommended to me by a friend, and that he seemed to me a person of considerable abilities. He promised to give him a situation if he really deserved it, and provided the result of the inquiries that would be made respecting him should be favourable. Nothing farther passed on the subject, and I thought no more of it. I knew not how much cause I should one day have to repent this step.

I had for some time observed that Margaret was employed on some very fine needlework; which in some degree surprised me, as the days had become very short, and winter was fast

approaching. I had forgotten the circumstance, until one morning, not finding her with our hostess as usual, I conceived some anxiety respecting her. A few days afterwards I was strangely surprised. My sister, who was going to a ball, requested me to get her some flowers in the Italian style at a milliner's. These flowers were very ingeniously worked: the myrtles, in particular, resembled nature so closely as to be a perfect deception. I immediately went to the shop, where I had formerly been with my sister. Scarcely had I saluted the mistress, when I perceived near the window a female whose face was half concealed by a straw bonnet. She appeared young and handsome. Her elegant form was easily distinguished under her cloak. I saw she was a workwoman, for she was then engaged in ornamenting a hat with ribands and feathers. The milliner showed me some boxes full of flowers. Whilst I was looking at them, I cast my eyes on the damsel sitting near the window. I was astonished to see how much she resembled Margaret; but at length I found it was Margaret herself! I was confirmed in this discovery by her winking, and placing her finger on her mouth, to request me not to let it be known that we were acquainted. I distressed the milliner by my indecision even more than a woman would have done. How could I determine, agitated as I was? Yet I took pleasure in prolonging this

agitation: I found myself near my beloved. In this new costume, although I was hurt at her wearing it, she appeared more charming than ever. The milliner at length was out of patience; she placed in my hands a large box full of flowers, requesting me to show them to my sister, and to let her choose for herself.

On my return, my father informed me that the Archduke Joseph, afterwards the Emperor Joseph II., was speedily to be elected and crowned king of the Romans. We began to examine the journals which had given a particular account of the last two coronations. We then had to consult the *capitulations* signed by the respective sovereigns, in order to judge of the various new conditions which might be imposed on the Archduke. This occupation employed us the whole of the day, and was even prolonged to a late hour in the night. The enchanting countenance of Margaret, sometimes in her usual costume, sometimes in her new attire, incessantly occurred to my imagination; and put to flight all thoughts of the capitulations and coronations. I had not been able to go out to see her. I passed the night in an uneasy and agitated state. The whole of the following day was spent in the same occupations as the preceding; at length in the evening I found a leisure moment to fly to the presence of my charmer. She was in her usual



dress, and began to laugh when she saw me. I durst not at first say any thing before the company; but when every one was seated I could no longer keep silence, but expressed my surprise that she did not explain to her friends why they had not had the pleasure of seeing her the preceding day. She replied, that our last conversation on the means of gaining our livelihood had produced a consultation between her and her relations, respecting the manner in which a woman might employ her talents to her own advantage. Having learnt from one of her cousins that a milliner was in want of an assistant, she had seized the opportunity. She passed almost the whole day in this employment, the salary of which rendered her independent. In the shop she was obliged to adopt the usual dress of a milliner, but at home she resumed her ordinary costume. This explanation satisfied me, although I was concerned to see this lovely girl under the necessity of appearing in a shop open to every one who chose to enter, and situated in the very rendezvous and lounge of people of fashion; but I took great care not to allow my jealous anxiety to appear, and only brooded over my vexation in silence. The youngest of Margaret's cousins soon furnished me with orders for occasional poetry. He himself was desirous of learning to compose in this style: I long endeavoured to

qualify him by precepts, supported by examples; but he made scarcely any progress at all. Margaret continued to work at the milliner's; and when she came home, took a share in our literary exercises, in which she gave proofs of genius and native talents. We were all pleased with our evening parties. Our pleasure was not damped even by the rejection of one of our poetical works; and we unanimously pronounced, that the critic who had decided against it must have been devoid of common sense.

In the mean time the election and coronation of the king of the Romans drew near. The end of the year 1763, and the beginning of 1764, were employed in preparations for these solemnities. We soon witnessed a ceremony which we had never seen before, but which was only a prelude to more splendid fêtes. One of the officers of the chancery, escorted by four trumpeters, all on horseback and surrounded by a detachment of infantry, read aloud in each quarter of the city a long edict informing us of all that was to take place, and giving notice to the inhabitants to hold themselves in readiness for this important occasion. The senate frequently assembled to deliberate. Shortly afterwards an imperial quarter-master arrived, commissioned by the hereditary grand marshal to appoint and get ready the lodgings of the ambassadors and their suites, according to custom. Our house being

situate near the Roëmer, we were compelled to sustain our share of this burthen, but in a more satisfactory manner than on the former occasion. The apartment on the first floor, which had been occupied by the Count de Thorane, was now assigned to an envoy of the Elector Palatine. Baron Kœnigsthal, chargé d'affaires of Nuremberg, was lodged in the upper story. We were thus more crowded than at the time of the occupation of the city by the French. This was an excellent pretext for me to be frequently abroad; and the desire of seeing every object of public notice was a fair excuse for my continual roving. I was constantly traversing the city. The entry of the ambassadors, and that of the imperial commissioner which was conducted with great pomp, occupied our attention. The Prince of Lichtenstein attracted notice by the air of dignity that belonged to him. Nevertheless it was observed by connoisseurs that his fine liveries had already been worn; and hence they concluded that this coronation would not be equal in magnificence to that of the emperor Charles VII.

The election was at length fixed for the 3d of March, 1764. The whole city was in motion. The successive reception of the different ambassadors kept us continually on foot. I was obliged to observe every thing, in order to give an account of it at home, and to draw up memoranda of all that took place; which qualified me

to compose a faithful journal of all the ceremonies and public acts of the election and coronation. Amongst the persons of rank who then attracted my attention, I was most struck with the martial air of Prince Esterhazy, which reminded me of Marshal Broglie, the victor of Bergen. But all these eminent personages were in great measure eclipsed by Baron Plotho, who represented Frederic the Great in the capacity of elector of Brandenburg, and who, as the envoy of that celebrated prince, was the favourite of the public. The parsimony which characterized his dress, livery, and equipages, was indeed remarked; but ever since the seven years' war he had been looked upon as the hero of diplomacy. All eyes were fixed on him as he ascended to the Roman palace, a murmur of approbation was heard, and he was very near being loudly applauded. Such were the effects of the high opinion that was entertained of the Prussian king. The whole of this multitude of spectators were for him, heart and soul; nor were the inhabitants of Frankfort alone thus devoted to him,—all the Germans participated in their sentiments!

I took great pleasure in all these ceremonies. They appeared to me to have a profound meaning, and to be admirably adapted to represent the intimate union of the German states. The empire of Germany, which might almost be said to lie buried in the dust of maps, papers,

and books, seemed to us restored to life. I could not, however, conceal from myself that some radical defect seemed to lurk beneath all this pomp. The notes which I kept under my father's inspection, convinced me that the greater part of the German powers were divided; that they mutually sought to balance each other, and were only united by the intention and hope of imposing stricter limits on the new monarch. I saw each sovereign solely occupied in preserving and extending his influence and privileges, by securing his independence. Their apprehensions of the activity of Joseph II. and his supposed projects, kept them all on the alert.

These affairs interrupted our usual intercourse with my grandfather and relations in the senate. The compliments and presents they had to make to their illustrious guests occupied all their attention. The magistrates were nevertheless very busy with their protestations, and their resistance against each other's pretensions. I had now an opportunity of witnessing that Christian patience and long-suffering which had so much astonished me in our chronicles.

The arriving multitude hourly increased, and multiplied the difficulties and embarrassments of the occasion. In vain had the superannuated clauses of the Golden Bull been urged to each cabinet. They nevertheless allowed, not only those who were brought to Frankfort by the oc-

casion, not only their own attendants, but public officers and private individuals attracted merely by interest or curiosity, to present themselves under their auspices. There was therefore no fixed rule for the distribution of the gratuitous lodgings.

As to the young folks like myself, the spectacle afforded to us was not always satisfactory. We were most curious respecting the usages and costumes of old times. The Spanish cloaks, and the great hats and feathers of the ambassadors, preserved, indeed, some traces of these antiquities; but the incongruity and bad taste of the modern costume often disgusted us. We therefore heard with pleasure that preparations were making for the reception of the Emperor and the young King elect, that the electoral college would soon arrive, and that the election was fixed for the 27th of March. The insignia of the empire were brought from Nuremberg and Aix-la-Chapelle. The ceremonies that were in preparation promised to fulfil our expectations better than the preceding.

The entry of the Elector of Mentz took place on the 21st of March. Then began the salutes of artillery, with which we were destined for a long time to be stunned. All the personages who had hitherto appeared were only subordinate characters. Now, for the first time, we saw an independent prince, a sovereign, the next

in rank to the Emperor, with an escort suitable to his dignity.

On the same day Lavater, returning from Berlin and passing through Frankfort, witnessed this ceremony. All this worldly pomp must have been of no importance in his sight. Nevertheless the circumstances of this solemn entry must have remained strongly impressed on his memory; for long afterwards this man, whose singularities were equal to his merits, having one day read to me a poetical paraphrase of the Apocalypse, I recognized in the description of the march of Antichrist, an exact account of that of the Elector of Mentz on his entry into Frankfort. Lavater had not even forgotten the plumes which adorned the heads of that prince's four bay horses. I shall have more to say on this subject when I reach the period of that singular poetical invention, the authors of which, to render the allegories of the Old and New Testaments more sensible to us, have clothed them in a modern dress, and attributed to the ancient personages who figure in them all the circumstances of our ordinary way of life, without regard to the greater or less dignity of the particulars. It would have been impossible to go beyond Lavater and his competitors in this respect; for one of them, in relating the entry of the three kings or magi of the East into Bethlehem, has so completely dressed them in the

costume of our times, that no one could mistake the princes and lords who were the friends of the celebrated pastor of Zurich. But let us for the present leave the elector Emeric-Joseph, and return to my dear Margaret. I perceived her just as the crowd was dispersing. She was accompanied by Pylades and his betrothed (for this trio seemed to have become inseparable). We immediately resolved to pass the evening together. I was at liberty that day. All our usual party had assembled. Every one was relating what he had seen, and making his remarks. "All you tell me," said Margaret, "is still less intelligible to me than the events of the day. I cannot account for them, and yet I should like to understand something of the matter." I proposed to assist her; for which purpose I saw no better plan than that of relating in regular succession all the particulars of these ceremonies, which I compared to a play, where the curtain is alternately raised and let down, the better to enable the spectators to fix in their minds the several subjects represented. With the help of a slate and pencil, I explained whatever obscurities my expressions might have left in my narration. The extreme attention which Margaret paid encouraged me; and every one, in short, appeared satisfied with my explanations. When I had finished this description, she thanked me; declaring how much she envied those who were



sufficiently well informed to conceive a correct idea of remarkable objects. She regretted that she was only a woman; and assured me, in a very affectionate manner, how grateful she felt for what she had already learnt of me. "Were I  
"a young man," said she, "we would go and  
"study together at the university. We should  
"both improve greatly." We continued to converse in this manner; and she expressed a wish to learn French, which language she found would be indispensable for her as a milliner.

A young couple, apparently formed by nature to love each other, never feel a more powerful mutual attraction than when one is desirous to learn, and the other eager to teach. From this reciprocal inclination arises the most intimate and amiable intercourse. The mistress cherishes in her lover the creator of her intellectual existence. The lover delights to contemplate his own work in the moral improvement of his mistress, who hence becomes dearer to him than before. This interchange of docility and instruction is so delightful, that from Abelard to Saint Preux connexions of this kind have given rise to the most ardent passions, the most exquisite happiness, and the most unparalleled sufferings.

During the solemnities attendant on the arrival of the Emperor and King, and the election, I had scarcely had a moment to myself. At length arrived the end of the month of March, the latter

half of which had produced us so many splendid fêtes. I had promised Margaret a full and particular description of all that had been done, and of the preparations for the approaching coronation. I rapidly wrote down an account of all I had seen, and of all the information I had collected at the chancery. At length I found an opportunity, at a late hour one evening, to pay her a visit. I found our society assembled; but there were others in company, with whom I was unacquainted. They were all engaged in play. Margaret and the younger of her cousins were the only persons who attended to me. This charming girl expressed in the most pleasing manner how highly she had been gratified in having witnessed the spectacle of the solemnities, as if she had been a native of the city of Frankfort.\* She listened to my descriptions with interest, and expressed the liveliest gratitude for my attention to her.

Time fled rapidly and unnoticed by us during this conversation. It was already past midnight, and unfortunately I had forgotten the key of our door. I could not attempt to return home, without running the risk of being remarked and interrogated. I imparted my embarrassment to Margaret. "The best thing we can do," said she, "is to remain all together." Her cousins and the

\* Strangers in general had been obliged to leave the city.--ED.

rest, not knowing where to go at that hour, had already thought of the same expedient: it was soon generally adopted. Margaret went out to prepare coffee; and, as the candles were nearly going out, she lighted a great lamp. The coffee enlivened us, and kept us awake during great part of the night. By degrees play was given over, and conversation ceased. The hostess fell asleep in a great arm-chair. The strangers, fatigued with their journey, were snoring here and there. Pylades and his mistress sat in a corner: she was asleep, with her head reclining on the shoulder of her lover, who speedily followed her example. The youngest of the cousins slept with his head resting on his arms, which were folded on the table. I sat near the window, and Margaret near me: we conversed uninterruptedly. At length sleep assumed its empire over her also: she leaned her lovely head on my shoulder, and immediately fell asleep. I was thus left the only person awake, in the most singular situation in which the brother of death could have surprised me. I yielded at last to his influence. When I awoke it was already broad day. Margaret stood before the glass, arranging her hat. She appeared to me more lovely than ever; and as she quitted us, she pressed my hand in the most affectionate manner. I returned homewards by a by-way, avoiding the direction in which I might have been perceived by my father. My mother,

whose mediation we constantly resorted to, had excused my absence in the morning, at breakfast-time, by pretending that I had gone out very early. Thus I was spared any unpleasant consequences from this night, which I passed amidst the most harmless pleasures.

On the whole, the busy crowd in which I moved left no very lively impressions on my mind. I should have taken no farther interest in these varied pageants, than would have enabled me to make a dry report of what I had seen to my father and Mr. Kœnigsthal; but since all my wishes had been centered in Margaret, I had thought of nothing but how to see every thing well, and to discover the true meaning of all I saw. I repeated to myself, aloud, all the particulars of each remarkable circumstance, that I might fix them in my mind, in hopes of hearing my attention and accuracy praised by her whom I loved. All other testimonies of approbation I considered as merely accessory.

I had been presented to many persons of distinction. But some of them had had no leisure to attend to me; others, although they had children themselves, were wholly unacquainted with the art of gaining a young man's confidence. I, on my part, was by no means solicitous to make myself agreeable. Accordingly there were some who favoured me with their protection, but yet did not honour me with their esteem. I was ex-

cessively eager in every pursuit that attracted me, but I never inquired whether it interested others or not. I was almost always too volatile or infatuated: I was sometimes considered as troublesome, and sometimes as reserved. This depended on the attraction or repugnance I felt. Hence even those who considered me as a promising youth accused me of singularity.

After the coronation there was a brilliant illumination, from which I expected much pleasure, having promised the three inseparable friends, Margaret, Pylades, and his mistress, to meet them at night for the purpose of going with them to see the illuminations. The town was already resplendent with light when I found myself with my dear Margaret. I took her arm. We walked through the streets. We were all four happy in being together. Her cousins at first joined us, but we soon lost them in the crowd. In front of the hotels of the different ambassadors, and particularly of that of the ambassador of the Elector Palatine, the magnificent illuminations rivalled the brightness of day. For fear of being recognized by any one, I kept silence, without giving offence to Margaret. We were induced to walk a great distance in order to see the illumination at the Prussian ambassador's hotel. We were much disappointed; it was mean and ridiculous. M. de Plotho had taken this opportunity of shewing his sentiments; and the disdain which he, like

the King his master, manifested on every occasion for ceremonies. We hastened back to Prince Esterhazy's palace, the illumination of which exceeded all the others in taste and splendour. He had converted a quarter that was by no means favourable into a complete fairy-land. Wine and eatables were here continually distributed.

We were delighted with this part of our walk. By the side of Margaret I fancied myself in an elysium, where chrystal vases, suspended to the trees, were filled with a delicious liquor; and where the fruits, as they fell, were changed into exquisite viands. We now felt it necessary to recruit our strength, after so long a walk. Pylades took us into a very neat tavern. We had a good supper served up, and passed the greater part of the night in all the joy and happiness which the liveliest and purest sentiments of love and friendship could inspire. I attended Margaret home to her door. When we parted she impressed a kiss on my forehead. It was the first time she had granted me that favour and it proved the last. Alas! I was never to see her more!

The next morning, before I had risen, my mother entered my chamber. She appeared much distressed and agitated. "Rise," said she, "and prepare for bad news: we are informed that you have been keeping bad company, and you are implicated in serious accusations of

“ the most dangerous nature. Your father is  
“ distracted, and it was with much difficulty  
“ that we obtained leave to have you interro-  
“ gated by a third person. Remain in your  
“ chamber, and wait for the counsellor Schnei-  
“ der. Your father and the magistrates have  
“ appointed him to hear you, for the proceedings  
“ have already commenced, and the affair may  
“ take a very unfortunate turn.”

I plainly saw that this matter appeared to my mother much more serious than it really was, as far as I was concerned; but I was not a little uneasy at the idea that all my secret connexions were about to be discovered. At length our old admirer of Klopstock appeared, with tears in his eyes. He took me by the arm, saying:—“ It is  
“ an affliction to me to be sent to you upon an  
“ occasion like this. I should never have be-  
“ lieved that you would have forgotten yourself  
“ in this manner. But what may not be effected  
“ by bad company and bad examples! Thus it is  
“ that an inexperienced youth may be led on  
“ step by step into guilt.—My conscience,” I replied, “ accuses me neither of guilt nor of  
“ keeping bad company.—It is useless to at-  
“ tempt to defend yourself; all that you have to  
“ do is to confess candidly the whole truth.—  
“ What is it you wish to know?” I replied.—He then sat down, took a paper from his pocket, and began to question me. “ Did you not recom-

“mend N.N. to your grandfather for a clerk’s  
“situation?” I answered in the affirmative.  
“Where did you become acquainted with him?  
“—In my walks.—With whom was he?” I  
was silent, not choosing to betray my friends.  
“Your silence will be unavailing; the whole is  
“already discovered: this young man was in-  
“troduced to you by some of your comrades,  
“and particularly by—.” Here he mentioned  
three persons whose names were wholly unknown  
to me. I immediately told him so. “You will  
“not confess this connexion, yet you have been  
“but too intimate with them.—Not at all;  
“for, as I have already told you, except the  
“first whom you named, not one of them is  
“known to me; and even him I never saw but  
“in the open air.—Have you not frequently  
“been to —— street?—Never.” This was not  
strictly true; I had sometimes accompanied  
Pylades to his mistress’s who lived there. But  
we had always entered by the back door; and I  
therefore thought myself at liberty to say I had  
not been in the street.

Honest Schneider then asked me many other  
questions, all of which I was able to answer in  
the negative without prevarication. In fact I  
knew nothing of all he was inquiring about. At  
last he seemed dissatisfied, and said: “You are  
“making me a bad return for my confidence in  
“you, and the good will I bear towards you.



“ You cannot deny that you have composed  
“ letters for these parties or their accomplices,  
“ and that you have thus promoted their wicked  
“ schemes. I come to save you, for the matters  
“ in question are nothing less than forged writ-  
“ ings, wills, bills of exchange, and other similar  
“ acts. I am not here merely as the friend of  
“ the family ; I attend in the name and by order  
“ of the magistrates, who, in consideration of  
“ your family and your youth, are willing to act  
“ indulgently towards you and those youths  
“ who, like yourself, have been caught in the  
“ snare.” Amongst the persons he named there  
was not one with whom I had been intimate.  
His questions could, therefore, only have an in-  
direct reference to my acquaintances, and I re-  
tained hopes of saving my young friends ; but  
my skilful interrogator became more and more  
urgent. I could not deny that I had several  
times come home late at night ; that I had found  
means to procure a key of the house ; that I had  
several times been seen in parties of pleasure  
with youths of an inferior class of life to mine,  
and of doubtful appearance ; that girls had also  
been seen in our company ; in short I saw that  
all was discovered except the names of my  
friends, which encouraged me to persevere in  
my silence. “ Do not let me leave you thus,”  
said our worthy friend ; “ the affair must be  
“ speedily cleared up, otherwise some other

“ person will visit you who will not be trifled with. Let not your obstinacy render a case worse, which is bad enough already.”

I now represented to myself in the strongest colours, the situation of Margaret and her cousins. I saw them imprisoned, tried by a prejudiced tribunal, punished, and abandoned to infamy. A ray of light occurred to my mind, which convinced me that although they might be innocent with respect to me, they might have interfered in blameable transactions, especially the eldest, whom I had never liked, who always joined us very late, and who never had any thing good to communicate to us. I was, however, firm in not disclosing my connexions. “ I have personally nothing serious to reproach myself with,” said I to Mr. Schneider; “ I may therefore dismiss all apprehension on my own account. It might, nevertheless, not be impossible that some of those with whom I have associated might have been guilty of some offence. They may be discovered, taken up, tried, and punished; but I will never betray people who have always acted in an honourable and friendly way towards me.”

“ No doubt,” cried he, angrily interrupting me, “ they will be found. These bad characters used to meet at three houses.” He then named the streets, described the houses, and amongst them, unluckily, that which I fre-

quented. "The first of these haunts has already been searched," said he, "and the same thing is now doing at the other two. In a few hours all will be discovered. Do not hesitate to save yourself by an oral declaration from a juridical information, from being confronted with the accused, and all the unpleasant consequences of such proceedings." The house being thus named and described, it was useless to remain silent any longer. Besides I had hopes that by urging the innocence of our meetings, I might serve the accused. "Sit down then," said I to my examiner, who was leaving the room, "and I will tell you all, and relieve your heart and my own. I have only one request to make, and that is, that from this moment you will rely on my perfect veracity."

I then informed him of all that had happened. At first I spoke with calmness; but as I proceeded in describing persons, things, and circumstances, so many innocent pleasures, so much harmless enjoyment ending in a criminal proceeding, the emotions of grief which I felt became so powerful, that I at length burst into tears, and abandoned myself to the most violent affliction. Mr. Schneider considered my sufferings as arising from the internal conflict I felt on the point of discovering some criminal act. He endeavoured to calm my agitation, and in some measure succeeded, that is to say, he in-

duced me to relate my whole history to him. But, although he was glad to find nothing blameable in what had taken place as far as regarded me, he still seemed to doubt that I had told him all; and by his new questions he renewed my grief, and drove me almost out of my senses. At length I assured him that I had nothing more to communicate; that I was certain I had nothing to fear, being innocent, of a good family, and well supported. But my companions who were accused might be equally innocent, and find no one to believe their innocence and protect them, and that was the cause of my grief. I also declared to him, that unless they were treated with as much indulgence as myself, unless their follies and faults were excused, and in case the least degree of harshness or injustice should be shewn towards them, nothing in the world should prevent me from sharing all the injury done to them. My friend tried to satisfy me on this point; but I did not confide in his promises, and when he quitted me I was in the deepest affliction. I blamed myself for having told him every thing, and disclosed the secret of all my connexions. I foresaw that our youthful amusements, our tender inclinations, and our mutual confidence, might be misinterpreted. Perhaps I had compromised poor Pylades, and done him great injury. All these reflections presented themselves to my

mind with so much force, and rendered my grief so poignant, that I felt myself unable to resist the despair that was gaining on me. I rolled on the floor, and drenched its boards with my tears.

I know not how long I had remained in this sorrowful plight, when my sister came in: she was terrified at my behaviour, and endeavoured to raise my courage. She told me that a magistrate had waited in my father's room whilst our friend Schneider was with me; that they had all three been closeted together a long time; and that when Schneider and the magistrate went away, they were conversing with an air of satisfaction, and even laughing. She thought she had distinguished the words, "This is all very well; there is nothing in all this."—"No doubt," cried I, "there is nothing in it with respect to me, and such as me. I have committed no offence; and, even were I guilty, means would be found to protect me. But my friends, my poor friends! who will take their part?"—My sister endeavoured to console me, saying, that when it was wished to spare the great, it was also necessary to throw a veil over the faults of the little. She did not succeed. Scarcely had she left me when I again gave way to my sorrow. I was alternately tortured by the strength of my passion for Margaret, and by the dread of the misfortune which threatened us. My mind was occupied with the most

melancholy reveries, all representing to my fancy our mutual wretchedness.

Our friend Schneider had desired me to remain in my room, and not to converse on this affair with any one but my relations. I readily obeyed, for all I wished for was to be left alone. My mother and sister visited me from time to time. They did every thing that seemed likely to console me : on the second day they came on the part of my father, who was now better informed, to offer me a complete amnesty for the past, which I accepted with gratitude ; but I positively declined his invitation to accompany him to see the insignia of the empire, which were then the objects of general curiosity. I declared that I would see nothing that was passing in the world, that I had nothing to do with the Roman empire, until I could obtain better information respecting the fate of my poor friends. They left me without being able to give me any intelligence respecting them. On the following day I was urged to attend the festivities, but in vain. Neither the grand gala day, nor the desire of seeing so many great personages assembled, or the two great potentates dining in public, could prevail on me. I left these princes to receive and return the visits of the electors : the electoral college to meet in order to regulate the points still remaining unsettled, and to re-establish harmony amongst its members, whilst I remained

sunk in solitary wretchedness. At length the bells announced the conclusion of the solemnities: the emperor went to the church of the Capuchins; the King his son and the electors departed; whilst nothing could induce me to leave my chamber. Even the report of the last salutes of artillery had no effect on me. All my curiosity had evaporated, as the gunpowder had mingled with the air.

The only pleasure I indulged in was the melancholy one of sounding the lowest depth of my misfortunes, which I represented to myself in a thousand different forms. The whole power of my imagination only served to bring back these gloomy ideas perpetually to my mind. The violence of my grief, supported and aggravated by solitude, threatened at once the destruction of my body and mind by an incurable disorder. I no longer formed any wishes; nothing seemed to me worth wishing for. My only desire was to know the fate of my friends, and above all that of Margaret. Had they been able to make good their defence? Were they implicated by the informations in the offences under prosecution? and if so, to what extent? Such were the anxieties that tormented me. When I considered all the circumstances known to me, I always concluded in their favour: I saw them innocent and unfortunate. When I felt myself inking under the distressing suspense I was

kept in, I wrote to our friend Schneider, conjuring him in the most urgent manner to relieve me from my anxiety. But presently after, dreading to learn the full extent of my misfortune, I tore my letters. Thus was my heart alternately the victim of hope and grief.

My days and nights were passed in tears. An illness now seized me, which I looked upon in some measure as a blessing. Its appearance was sufficiently alarming to require the physician's aid, and that every thing possible should be done to tranquillize me. This they thought to effect by assuring me on oath, but without entering into particulars, that all who had been more or less implicated had been treated with the greatest indulgence; that my friends, whose innocence had doubtless been acknowledged, had got off with a reprimand; and that my dear Margaret had left the city to return to her native place. I did not believe this concluding part of the account; I judged that it had been a disgraceful banishment, not a voluntary removal. This intelligence was not adapted to improve the state of my health and spirits. The disorder accordingly increased, and gave me time to meditate on the romance of which I had become the hero;—on this singular romance, so fertile in sorrowful events, and so likely, as it seemed, to terminate in a tragical catastrophe, of which I was destined to be the victim.



## CHAPTER VI.

THE state of my feelings contributed sometimes to retard, and sometimes to hasten, my recovery; which was now impeded by a fresh vexation. I perceived that I was watched, and that no letter reached me, of which the probable effect had not first been ascertained. Hence I concluded that Pylades, one of Margaret's cousins, or perhaps she herself, had endeavoured to give me some information by writing, or to obtain some intelligence of me. This afforded fresh food for my imagination.

I soon had a superintendant placed over me. Fortunately it was a young man whom I loved and esteemed. He had been governor to the heir of a great family; his pupil had gone alone to the university. N— frequently came to see me during my illness. It seemed a matter of course to give him a chamber near mine. He endeavoured to divert me by occupying my attention, and never lost sight of me. I had already confided to him the greater part of what had happened to me, except my affection for Margaret; and I now resolved to disclose every

thing to him. The idea of constantly maintaining reserve with a friend was insupportable to me. I therefore opened my heart to him : I found it some relief to relate all the circumstances, to retrace all the particulars of pleasures now fled for ever. My Mentor was a man of sense. He readily perceived that the best way was to inform me fully of the result of the prosecutions, and that nothing ought to be concealed from me. He saw that, after making me an unreserved communication, he should be better authorized to urge me to hear reason : he might expect to be more willingly listened to, whilst persuading me to banish all thoughts of the past, and to begin a new life.

He therefore began by informing me of the fate of these youths, who, having begun with *mystifications*, had suffered themselves to be drawn into frolics suspiciously looked upon by the police, and afterwards into feats of dexterity that savoured strongly of roguery. From all these irregularities had sprung a kind of conspiracy, in which some unprincipled men had unfortunately engaged. The latter, beginning with imitating signatures and counterfeiting handwritings, had soon proceeded to criminal acts. I impatiently asked him to which of these two classes Margaret's cousin belonged, and I heard with joy that their complete innocence had been acknowledged. Although they were known to the real

criminals, they had cleared themselves of all suspicion of participation. My client, the young man whom I had recommended to my grandfather, (which had put the magistrates on the scent of my connexions with his friends), was, unluckily, one of the most dangerous of the whole troop. His object in soliciting the employment he had asked for, was to obtain an opportunity of concealing or carrying on some of his villainous schemes. This intelligence only increased my impatience to know the truth of Margaret's destiny. I pressed my friend to let me know it, again frankly acknowledging all my tenderness for her. N— shaking his head, began to laugh. "Set your mind at ease," said he: "she conducted herself extremely well, and the propriety of her behaviour was very handsomely acknowledged. Formed as she is to inspire love and good-will, even her judges felt the power of her charms, and could not oppose the wish she persisted in to remove from the city. What she declared respecting you also does her honour. I have read her deposition in the secret acts, and seen her signature."—"Her signature!" I exclaimed; "that signature which at once rendered me so happy and so unfortunate! What has she declared? what has she signed?" My friend hesitated to answer. The serenity of his countenance nevertheless announced nothing unpleasant. At last, "As you insist upon knowing," said he, "I

“ will tell you. When she was questioned respecting her intimacy with you : I cannot deny, she answered in a candid manner, that I have often seen him, and with pleasure. But I always considered, and treated him as a child. The affection I entertained for him was merely that of a sister. I have often given him good advice ; and far from enticing him into any questionable proceeding, I have prevented him from engaging in frolics that might have brought him into trouble.” My friend went on in this style, making Margaret hold the language of a governess ; but I had long ceased to listen to him. The idea that she had treated me as a child, in an authentic document, distracted me : I was completely disenchanted, and I thought myself entirely cured of my passion for her : I immediately assured my friend that I was so. I ceased to speak of her, and mentioned her name no more. I could not, however, so quickly get rid of the dangerous habit of thinking of her whom I had loved so dearly. Her countenance, her form, her deportment, were always present to my mind, although I now saw her in a very different light. I could not, in fact, endure that a young girl scarcely two or three years older than myself, should look upon me as a child,—on me, who thought myself quite a young man. That cold and reserved air, which had charmed me so much, now appeared to me quite revolting.

Those familiarities which she thought harmless towards me, and never permitted me to indulge in with her, seemed odious. I could, however, have pardoned her these lofty airs; but by signing that letter in which I had made her speak the language of a lover, she had given me a formal declaration. This appeared to me the act of a faithless and selfish coquette. Her masquerading at the milliner's no longer seemed so innocent. By incessantly revolving these painful reflections in my mind, I stripped her by degrees of all those qualities which had appeared so amiable to me; and when once my reason was convinced, I felt the necessity of banishing from my heart an object unworthy of my love. But her image, that cherished image, renewed my error whenever it recurred to my mind, which happened but too often.

At length I plucked the fatal dart from my breast. Reflection, and that vigorous health so propitious to youth, came to my aid; and I made serious efforts to recover myself. This excessive grief began to appear childish to me. This was an important step towards my restoration. Hitherto I had abandoned myself unreservedly every night to these storms of sorrow. Exhausted by tears and sighs, I could scarcely breathe. The disordered state of my chest rendered every meal a painful task to me. Deeply wounded in my feelings, I resolved to endeavour to banish all these weaknesses.

I now thought it unbecoming to sacrifice sleep, repose, and health, to my passion for a girl who had amused herself with acting the part of my nurse, which suited neither her nor me.

To deliver myself from all the ideas which nourished my disorder, I had but one resource--and that was activity. I was fully sensible of this. But what was to be the object of my exertions? I had, indeed, to improve myself in various studies. I had to prepare myself for the university, whither my age would shortly call me. But nothing interested me, and in nothing could I succeed. Many subjects were either too well known to me already, or appeared unworthy of my attention. For others, I found neither faculties nor opportunity. At last my friend's own peculiar taste led me into a study which was wholly new to me: he undertook to initiate me into the mysteries of philosophy. He thus opened to my industry an ample harvest of research, meditations, and knowledge. N-- had studied at Jena, under Daries. His methodical mind had embraced with great sagacity the entire doctrine of his master, which he endeavoured to impart to me. But this was not the manner in which so many new ideas could be arranged in my mind. I overwhelmed him with questions; he adjourned the answers: I started innumerable difficulties; he promised to remove them at a subsequent period. We differed essentially on a funda-

mental point. I maintained that philosophy was not a separate science, but that it was entirely included in religion and poetry. N— on the contrary insisted that philosophy was the basis of those two sciences. I firmly maintained the negative; and in the course of our researches I found arguments in support of my opinion at every step. In fact, there is in poetry a kind of faith in impossibility; and in religion, a faith of the same nature in what cannot be established on any reasonable foundation. It therefore appeared to me that philosophers would find it a very difficult task, were they to undertake to prove and elucidate these two kinds of faith by means of their usual methods of reasoning. Of this we speedily found confirmation in the history of philosophy, which shewed us each philosopher seeking a new foundation for science, and the sceptic at last concluding that there exists none.

It was necessary to set me to study this history of philosophy. My friend was constrained to adopt this step by my constant rejection of dogmatical instruction. I took a lively interest in this study. But it was because each opinion, each doctrine, as far as I was able to discover its meaning, appeared to me as good as the others. I was delighted at recognizing in the most ancient philosophers the indissoluble alliance of poetry, religion, and philosophy, forming only one indivisible whole. This only increased the force of

my attachment<sup>\*</sup> to my own opinion. I could in fact appeal to the songs of Orpheus and Hesiod, as well as to the book of Job, and the Psalms and Proverbs of Solomon. My friend had taken up an abridgment of Brucker's\* book for the text of his lessons. But the further we advanced the less real progress did I make. I could not form a clear idea of the systems of the first Greek philosophers. I saw in Socrates a sage, an excellent man, whose life and death appeared to me comparable in some degree to those of Christ. The disciples of the former seemed to bear the most striking resemblance to the apostles, both taking a rigid morality for their rule. Neither the subtilty of Aristotle nor the copious eloquence of Plato made a profound impression on my mind. I had previously had some inclination to the philosophy of the Stoics. I therefore commenced Epictetus with pleasure, and found his doctrine very attractive. In vain did my friend disapprove of my predilection for this system; he could never wean me from it.

As soon as the weather would permit, we resumed the pleasure of walking out. My friend preferred the very agreeable places of rendezvous with which the city is surrounded; but these were precisely the spots I was least willing to frequent. I saw on every side the

\* Brucker's Work is a History of Philosophy, in 6 vols. 8vo. in Latin.—Ed.



phantoms of the two cousins. I always dreaded meeting them. The gaze of the most total strangers was painful to me. I could no longer taste that pleasure which, like that of health, is only perceived when lost—the pleasure of mixing indiscriminately in the crowd at one's ease, and without fear of being remarked. I now began to feel the incroachments of a hypochondriac mania. I fancied myself the object of public attention. I imagined every moment that observing eyes and severe looks were fixed on me.

I therefore drew my friend into the woods; I fled from strait and formal walks. I sought the beautiful groves in the vicinity of Frankfort. Their extent is not very great, but yet they were sufficient to afford an asylum to a poor wounded heart. I had selected in the thickest part of the wood a situation of majestic gravity. Oaks and ashes of venerable age afforded a fine shade to the vast and verdant area beneath their branches. The slope of the ground disclosed to the eye a perfect perception of the stately forms of these old trunks. At the back of this circular space were thick bushes, overhung by some grand masses of rock covered with moss, whence rushed a cascade, which, falling to the ground, formed a wide and limpid rivulet.

When I brought my friend to this retreat, he, who regretted the populous walks of the fields on the banks of the Maine, laughed at my taste,

which he said was worthy of a true German. He then explained to me, upon the authority of Tacitus, how our ancestors lived content with the emotions which nature lavishes on us in those solitudes where she appears so rich in edifices, which never required the aid of art. Oh! I cried, interrupting him,—oh! that this superb palace of verdure were plunged in the depths of a wild desert! Oh! that we could pitch our tent in it, and, separated from the world, spend our lives in holy contemplation! Can the Divinity be honoured more purely than in these rural temples, where no image is requisite? Is not the homage we offer him from the bottom of our hearts, when recently purified by converse with nature, the most worthy his acceptance? My feelings at that moment are still fresh in my memory; but I cannot now recollect the expressions I made use of. The sentiments of youth, free and powerful as those of uncivilized men, easily rise to the level of the sublime. When this enthusiasm is excited in us by the contemplation of grand objects, and particularly when we can scarcely conceive its vague and ideal forms, we spring up to a height for which we do not seem destined by nature.

That internal voice of the soul which transports us into a sphere above our own, speaks more or less distinctly to all men. All seek by various means to gratify this noble thirst for exaltation;

but as the dimness of twilight and the obscurity of night, which seem to unite and confound objects, are favourable to the sublime, daylight, on the contrary, dispels it by distinguishing and separating the same objects. Every idea which has a tendency to become insulated and fixed, would soon annihilate the sublime, were we not fortunately enabled to take refuge in the truly beautiful, and unite our souls with it in so intimate a manner that the result is an immortal and indivisible whole.

My prudent friend, not content with the shortness of the moments passed in these enjoyments, abridged them still farther. When once I had returned into the world, I sought in vain, amidst the mean and common objects which surrounded me, to re-produce in myself this sentiment of the sublime. Scarcely could I even preserve the remembrance of it. The ferment of my mind was, however, too great to subside on a sudden into calmness. I had loved, and the object of my love was torn from me; I had lived, and bitterness was infused into my cup of life. When a friend allows us to perceive too clearly his intention to guide us, he rather cools than excites our zeal. A woman is to us a celestial being, who brings us happiness. Not only do our hearts pay homage to her, they fly to meet her instructions, and she governs us through the elevation of our sentiments which she excites. But that ravish-

ing face, which had excited in me the idea of perfect beauty, had fled for ever.

From childhood I had possessed a taste for painting. Of all my organs the eye was that with which I could best seize what was remarkable in the world. I observed objects with extreme attention; but I was impressed only by the general effect of the whole. If nature had not granted me the talent of descriptive poetry, neither had she been more bounteous towards me with respect to the faculties which distinguish the painter skilled in the representation of single objects, and in seizing the details of them. Our solitary walks revived my taste for this art. I suddenly resolved to endeavour to trace, by the help of the pencil, all that appeared to me beautiful, all that delighted my eyes in our favourite woods. I therefore began to draw from nature. I applied myself to this occupation with equal perseverance, inaptitude, and awkwardness. It enabled me to get rid of my tutor; who seeing me absorbed in my eager devotion to this study for whole hours, soon accustomed himself to walk about near me, with a book in his hand, being certain of finding me again at the same place. My drawing had also still more powerful charms for me. It was not so much the subjects delineated by my unskilful pencil, that I saw in these productions, as the gay imagery that floated in my imagination whilst I was thus em-

ployed. I attached to every tree, leaf, and plant, the remembrance of one of my short moments of felicity. Thus my portfolio became my most valued journal, and these rude sketches, embellished by my recollections, have always possessed so lively an interest in my sight, that I have never been able to determine on sacrificing them. Even now, I confess, this sacrifice would be beyond my strength.

My father saw with pleasure my renewed attention to an art of which he was fond. He examined my work, shewed me its defects, and pointed out the means of correcting them. By degrees my friends became convinced that I had no thoughts of returning to my forbidden connexions. I was no longer watched; and was restored to liberty. In company with other youths I made several excursions on the banks of the Rhine, and in the beautiful country watered by the Maine. But I did not improve in landscape-painting by these tours.

I constantly returned with increased pleasure from these often repeated excursions, which were partly undertaken for pleasure and partly for improvement in art. My sister was the magnet that attracted me towards home. She was but a year younger than myself. We had lived, from our earliest infancy, in the most intimate union, which the internal state of our family tended to strengthen. My father had set up a principle to

which he always adhered. He made it a point to conceal an affectionate and tender heart under the guise of an inflexible severity, necessary, according to him, for attaining the two objects which he proposed to himself, namely, to give his children an excellent education, and to maintain strict order in his family. My mother was quite a child when he married her, and she might be said to have been brought up with us. She had, as well as my sister and myself, all the vivacity and avidity of youth for the enjoyments of the moment. Our inclinations always tended to the pleasures of society. Time only increased this contrast between my father and us. He pursued his own plan with unshaken perseverance, whilst my mother and her children were equally attached to their own sentiments and wishes.

Our hours of retirement and labour were long, and we had but a very short time to devote to recreation and pleasure, especially my sister, who never could remain so long absent from home as I could. Thus the pleasure of our conversations was heightened by the regret she felt at being unable to accompany me in my excursions.

In our earliest years our studies, diversions, mental and bodily developement, had all been common to both. We might have been taken for twins. Time only cemented our intimacy, by strengthening our mutual confidence. The

vivid interest of youth, the surprise caused by the awakening of sensibility and the wants of the soul, which mutually lend their language to each other, the observations which that state suggests, and which tend rather to prolong than to enlighten its obscurity (like the mist of the valley, which veils it in rising, instead of allowing the light to enter,) the illusions, the errors which arise from this situation—all these vague and novel impressions strike a brother and sister of the same age at the same time, and yet they are unable to explain to each other the singularity of what they experience. For, although their friendship and the ties of consanguinity by which they are connected seem to afford them opportunities for such communication, a holy awe, produced by those very ties, always raises an insurmountable barrier between them, and retains them in their ignorance.

It is with regret that I here take this cursory notice of a being so dear and so soon lost to me. Her extraordinary merit and our tender friendship had early inspired me with the idea of consecrating to her memory a monument worthy of her virtues. Bent on preserving her beloved image in all its moral beauty, I had conceived the idea of a work of imagination, in which she would have figured as the principal personage. But I must have borrowed the pencil of Richardson and the dramatic form of his romances for

this purpose. Nothing but the greatest exactness in the details, and an infinity of shades and salient peculiarities, can endow a character with motion and life, and present it as a whole. It is in the stupendous depth of the recesses of the human heart that the moral portrait of an individual is to be sought. The source can only be well conceived by observation of the waters that flow from it. But the tumult of the world has diverted me from this pious design, as it has from so many others; and all that I can now do is to attempt, as it were, by the aid of a magical mirror, to call up for a moment this blessed shade.

My sister was tall. Her figure was slender and elegant; her deportment noble; and her air of native cheerfulness enlivened features of an agreeably delicate complexion, although neither very regular nor very expressive: they did not indicate great firmness of mind. Her eyes, although not the very finest I ever saw, were particularly expressive; and, when animated by any tender expression, brightened into extraordinary splendour. Yet this expression was not that of the sensibility which emanates from the heart, and seems to solicit a return; it sprang from the soul, and manifested that generous sentiment which gives and demands nothing. On the whole, however, her countenance could not be called attractive. She was sensible of this at an early period; and this idea gradually became more



painful to her as she approached that age at which the youth of each sex find an innocent pleasure in rendering themselves agreeable to the other.

In general we are all satisfied with our faces, whether handsome or not; but my sister had too much good sense to be blind to her deficiency in this respect. It is not improbable that, on comparing herself with her companions, she even exaggerated her own want of beauty, without consoling herself by the consciousness of her superiority in the qualities of the soul and the understanding. In fact, if it be possible for a female to possess any compensation for the want of personal attractions, my sister was amply indemnified by the unbounded confidence, esteem, and attachment of her female friends, of every age. She was the centre of a very agreeable circle, into which several youths had introduced themselves: still she had no friend of the other sex, although few young ladies are without one\*. There is a kind of dignity in the character and manners which estranges rather than attracts. She was deeply sensible of this; she imparted to me the grief it occasioned her, and became the more fondly attached to me. We stood in a singular

\* This is true of Germany and Switzerland, where young ladies enjoy the greatest freedom, and form their society themselves, admitting such young men as they think fit; nor do their morals seem to be the worse for this liberty.—ED.

situation. A confidant of the other sex, to whom a love affair is entrusted, takes at first a warm interest in it: but this interest sometimes changes into rivalry, the confidant endeavouring to appropriate to himself, or herself, the sentiments thus avowed. It was nearly thus with my sister and me; for when my connexion with Margaret was broken off, my sister seemed the more eager to console me, from a secret satisfaction which she felt in no longer having a rival in my heart: and it was also a satisfaction to me to hear her assure me with earnestness, that I was the only youth who really appreciated, loved, and honoured her. But when the sorrow which the loss of Margaret from time to time occasioned me, drew tears from my eyes, my despondency excited an angry impatience in my sister's mind. She would then exclaim against the illusions of love and youth. We both found ourselves extremely unhappy; and our misfortune seemed to us the less supportable, as it could not be alleviated by the hope of seeing our mutual confidence ripen into love.

Fortunately, that eccentric god, who often does so much unnecessary mischief, was on this occasion kind enough to come to our assistance. I was intimate with a young English student, who was well acquainted with the principles of his language. I took lessons from him. He acquainted me with many interesting particulars

relating to his country. He had long visited at our house before I observed his inclination for my sister. This inclination had, however, been formed in silence, and become a passion which was at length suddenly declared. My sister entertained a regard for him of which he was worthy. She had often made a third in our English conversations. Our young preceptor had familiarized us both with the beauties of his language. We had so perfectly accustomed ourselves to his tone and pronunciation, and his peculiar style of expression, that when we were all talking together our discourse might have been thought to emanate from a single voice. His endeavours to learn German of us were less successful. Accordingly it appeared to me that this little love affair was managed in English.

The two lovers were admirably suited to each other. The young foreigner's figure, elegant as that of Cornelia, was still more slender. But for the marks of the small-pox, his face would have been very handsome: his countenance indicated the calmness and firmness of his mind; and, indeed, its expression might often have been mistaken for apathy and coldness. But he had an excellent heart and a noble soul: his affections were frank, decided, and constant. This serious couple bore no resemblance to those lovers whose improvident levity so readily contracts those inconsiderate connexions, which

producing no permanent effect on the rest of their lives, too frequently afford but an imperfect image of the more serious union of which they ought to be the prognostics.

Thus united in a society of young persons of both sexes, we often passed our hours very agreeably; parties of pleasure, sometimes on the water, afforded us much amusement. Some of us, including myself, indulged our inclination for rhyming. Heroic-comic poetry, in the style of Pope's Rape of the Lock, and the Robber of Zacharie, his imitator, amused us for some time.

I continued my studies with zeal. I conceived an absolute passion for the history of ancient literature. The perusal of Gessner's *Isagoge*, and Morhof's *Polyhistor*, threw me into a kind of encyclopedical mania; but, after studying day and night with constant activity, I found myself in the midst of a labyrinth, in which I met with more fatigue and difficulties than instruction. I soon afterwards lost my way in a still more perplexing maze, by plunging into the reading of Bayle, whose work I had discovered in my father's library.

I became daily more sensible of the importance of the dead languages, and more satisfied that the ancients had transmitted to us all the models of the art of speaking and writing, as well as of all that ever the world produced of

truly grand and beautiful. I had laid aside the study of Hebrew, of the Bible, and the Greek language, in which I had not proceeded beyond the New Testament; and I now applied the more assiduously to the Latin language, the masterpieces of which afford us an easier access, illustrated as they are by the erudition acquired during so many ages, and by the labours of translators and learned men. I read many works in that language with great facility: I imagined that I understood my authors, because I never deviated from the literal sense. What was my vexation on learning, when I afterwards read Grotius, that he discovered in Terence beauties and an interest which escaped my schoolboy inexperience. Blest confidence of youth, and even of maturity, which always imagines it understands things thoroughly, because it measures every thing by its own faculties, without considering the truth, the elevation, or the depth of objects!

I had learnt Latin in the same manner as German, Italian, French, and English—solely by use, and without confining myself to the observation of rules and principles. The study of languages appeared to me one of the easiest things in the world. By the aid of the ear, guided by the sense, I retained the words, their formation, meaning, and derivatives; and I could

make use of a language thus acquired, for the purposes of speaking and writing, with facility.

Michaelmas was approaching, the period fixed for my going to the university. My industry was excited by an ardent desire to learn. At the same time I felt an increased aversion to my native town. The removal of Margaret had annihilated all the joys of my youth. I employed my time in study, endeavouring to repair my loss by making myself a new being. I had left off my excursions in the town, confining myself for the future to merely passing along the streets like other people. I had not set my foot in the quarter in which my beloved formerly lived, nor in the country in its vicinity. The old walls and antique towers of Frankfort, and the very constitution of that city, with all that I had formerly thought so interesting, now afforded me none but disagreeable images. As the grandson of the pretor, I was not ignorant of the secret defects of this republic. Children cease to find pleasure in their researches, the moment they begin to doubt the excellence of what they venerated. The vexations caused to worthy and virtuous men, by the excesses or the corruption of party spirit, were odious to me. The morality of childhood is rigid. My father, reduced to a private station, loudly expressed his dissatisfaction at the misconduct of our magistrates.

Did I not, moreover, see him, after all his studies, labour, and travels—with all his diversified knowledge—confined in solitude? The prospect of a similar separation from the world was by no means agreeable to me. All these reflections made me unhappy. I saw no means of escaping them, but by deviating from the plan which had been laid down for me, and adopting one more suitable to my inclinations. To abandon the study of law, and devote myself to that of languages, of antiquity, history, and the belles-lettres in general, was my favourite scheme.

I thought myself accountable to nature, my fellow-creatures, and myself, for the use of my poetical powers. I delighted in cultivating them. Guided by instinct, and fearless of criticism, I exercised myself in this art with still increasing facility. Without having an implicit faith in the excellence of my productions, without concealing their defects from myself, I nevertheless thought them not quite contemptible. Whilst I myself censured some of these compositions with severity, I cherished in silence the hope of reaching still higher degrees of perfection. I delighted to think I might one day be honourably quoted with Hagedorn, Gellert, and their competitors. But this prospect seemed to me too vague and distant to be made the sole object of my efforts. I was desirous of acquiring, by persevering applica-

tion to the rules which I regarded as fundamental, a profound knowledge of antiquity, thus to facilitate and ensure the perfection of my works, and render myself capable of academical teaching: this was the most worthy aim, as I thought, which a young man, anxious to form himself, and to contribute to the accomplishment of others, could propose to himself. With this view I had always turned my eyes towards Gottingen. My whole confidence waited on such men as Heyne, Michaelis, and their worthy colleagues. My most ardent wish was to sit at the foot of their chairs, and to be reckoned in the number of their disciples. But my father was inflexible. In vain did several friends of the family, who shared my predilection, endeavour to move Mr. Goëthe: I was obliged to make up my mind to go to Leipsic. I then conceived the design of looking on the study of law only as a task imposed upon me, and of following my own plan, without regard to my father's will. His obstinacy in opposing my plans without knowing them, only confirmed me in these intentions, not very reconcilable with filial piety. Nor did I scruple to listen whole hours, to him with ideas directly opposite to those which he entertained, whilst he was planning the course of my studies and life at the university.

Thus forced to abandon all thoughts of Gottin-gen, I began to look towards Leipsic. There



were also luminous stars in that quarter: Ernesti and Morus. These celebrated professors had good claims to my confidence. It was at Leipsic, then, that I was to follow the plan I had laid down for myself. To open a path for myself appeared to me a scheme as honourable as to others it might have seemed romantic. I had before my eyes the progress of Griesbach, whose name was already celebrated, and who had pursued the track upon which I was now about to enter. The joy of a prisoner whose irons are taken off, and who is passing the threshold of his dungeon, cannot be more lively than mine became as the month of October drew nigh. Neither the unfavourable weather, the bad roads, nor the idea of finding myself in a strange town at the beginning of the winter, gave me any uneasiness. I was tired of my present situation, and the unknown world seemed to promise me nothing but gratification and serenity.

Careful as I was to conceal my plans, I could not refrain from imparting them to my sister. She was at first alarmed at them; but I reconciled her by promising to send for her, and to share with her the happiness which I expected to attain.

The wished-for Michaelmas at length arrived, and I set out, full of joy, with the bookseller Fleischer and his wife, leaving behind me with indifference the respectable town in which I was

born and brought up, and leaving it as if I never expected to see it again.

Thus, at certain periods of life do children separate from parents, servants from masters, and friends from friends; and whatever may be the success of their efforts to make their own way in the world, become independent, and live a life of their own; they are in the course of nature.

I reached Leipsic at the time of the fair. At the sight of goods and merchants that were known to me, I thought myself still in my native town. I visited the shops and the market. The inhabitants of the Eastern countries, the Poles, the Russians, and particularly the Greeks, whose fine countenances and elegantly noble dresses I took pleasure in contemplating, attracted my attention by the singularity and variety of their costumes.

This grand bustle was soon over; I had no longer any spectacle but that of the city itself with its elegant houses, all of equal height. There is something at once agreeable and imposing in this view.

But it was not that to which I had been accustomed from infancy. There is nothing about Leipsic to call up remembrances of ancient times. Its monuments distinguish a new epoch of commercial industry and opulence. Nevertheless, I was pleased with its buildings, which appear immense, each of them facing into two different

streets, and these streets like so many burghs or small towns. I took up my residence between the old market and the new. I obtained two pretty rooms, which Fleischer the bookseller had occupied during the fair, at a reasonable rent. I had a fellow-lodger, who was a theologian, profoundly learned in his science, possessed of great abilities, but poor, and afflicted with very bad eyes, which rendered him extremely uneasy with respect to the future. He had brought this disorder upon himself by reading too long in the twilight, and even by moonlight, in order to save a little oil. Our old hostess was very kind to him, very civil to me, and very attentive to both.

Furnished with my letters of recommendation, I hastened to wait on Counsellor Boëhme, professor of history and public law. He presented me to his wife, a well-informed, clever woman, of an amiable disposition, and very delicate health. I communicated my plan of studies to Mr. Boëhme; but he, in his capacity of a professor learned in history and jurisprudence, entertained a declared hatred of all that come under the denomination of liberal studies: he did not relish my plans. Above all, he could not endure Gellert, my sincere esteem for whom I had very injudiciously disclosed to him. It did not appear very likely that he would deprive himself of a pupil in order to send him one. After a long sermon,

Mr. Boëhme gave me to understand that he could not authorize my plan of study without the consent of my parents. He declaimed with warmth against philology, the study of languages, and particularly against poetry, my taste for which I had suffered him to perceive. He insisted that the best way to study antiquity was through the medium of jurisprudence. He cited the examples of a number of elegant juriconsults, as Eberhard, Otto, and Heineccius, and promised to open the treasures of Roman antiquities, and the history of the civil law to my researches. Madame Boëhme, whom I afterwards saw alone, urged her husband's plan with great kindness and suavity. They allowed me time for reflection. I saw the numerous difficulties attending the execution of my scheme, which I had thought so easy: I therefore gave up the point; resolving, however, to attend Gellert's course of literary history, and to take private lessons of him.

The love and veneration of all the students for this excellent man were truly extraordinary. I had already paid him a visit, and he had received me kindly. His features were small and delicate, without being thin; a sweet and melancholy expression; a very fine forehead, an aquiline well-formed nose, a fine mouth, and well-proportioned oval face, contributed to render him personally agreeable. It was no easy matter to gain access to him. His two servants might have been com-

pared to priests appointed to guard some sanctuary, the approach to which was neither open to everybody nor at all times. This precaution was far from useless; for if Gellert had always been visible to all who wished to see him and speak to him, he must have sacrificed all his time to them.

I at first attended my courses punctually; but I soon saw that the philosophical lectures taught me nothing new. I thought it singular that logic compelled me to decompose, recompose, and then decompose again those operations of the mind, which I had from childhood been accustomed to execute with the greatest facility. It appeared to me that I knew almost as much of the nature of things, the universe, and God, as my professor himself.

Nor was the course of jurisprudence more beneficial to me. I already knew precisely all that it pleased our professor to teach us. The tediousness of recopying all that my studies under my father had engraven on my mind for ever, soon checked the activity which I usually displayed in transcribing my lessons.

The difference of age amongst the professors is a serious evil to students. The young masters teach in order to improve themselves. If their heads are well organized, they drive the student forward too rapidly; thus accomplishing themselves at the expense of their scholars, to whom

they communicate not what it would be most to their benefit to know, but what best suits the instructor. Under the old professors, on the other hand, there is great danger of making no progress at all. They cling to antique ideas, and drag with them a load of futilities and errors of which time has already disposed. A young student is thus bandied about between these two extremes, and is very fortunate if he can find an opportunity of improvement by hearing the lessons of middle-aged professors, sufficiently learned to direct him with judgment, and sufficiently enlightened to be sensible of the necessity of further improvement.

Many persons of both sexes were to be found at Leipsic, equally distinguished for learning and politeness, and anxious to make themselves agreeable in society. Company of this description could not but produce a beneficial effect on the students. This university bears, accordingly, a character which is not to be found in any other in Germany: for as no general system of education has yet become predominant, each university is strongly attached to that which it has adopted; and its distinctive features are always obtrusive. Jena and Halle are remarkable for excessive ferocity. Bodily strength, gymnastic exercises, a savage aptness for all that is calculated to secure our own preservation, were the prevailing distinctions of the academical manners. The

students professed a sovereign contempt for the townsmen, and thought themselves privileged to indulge in every kind of liberty and licentiousness. At Leipsic, on the contrary, every student, anxious to connect himself with the inhabitants who were distinguished for wealth and politeness, was under the necessity of adopting their manners.

A system of politeness which is not at once the flower and the fruit of a high state of civilization, has always some constraint about it, and is invariably clogged with some ridiculous forms, to which it remains too scrupulously faithful. Hence the ferocious hunters of the banks of the Saale<sup>\*</sup> thought themselves very superior to the tender shepherds of the banks of the Pleisse.†

Independently of their connexions with the Leipsic merchants, the students belonging to rich and respectable families met with models of the French manners in the protestant colony. The independence which the professors derived from their personal fortunes or their salaries, and which raised them above all mean compliances; the attachment of the Saxon pupils to the local customs; the vicinity of Dresden, the attention of which city was fixed upon us; the solid piety of the superintendant, whose high jurisdiction extended over the university; all contributed to

\* The river on which Halle is situated.

† Leipsic is on the Pleisse.

maintain a spirit favourable to religion and morals.

I made my appearance in elegant society under several disadvantages: in the first place that of my obsolete dress, for which I was indebted to the economical habits of my father, who, being an utter foe to idleness, occupied the leisure hours of our servants in making our clothes; and these good folks were anything but fashionable tailors: in the next, my provincial dialect, full of proverbial and other strange expressions, which was ridiculous in Saxony. The kind attention with which I was honoured by Madame Boëhme, and her good advice, aided me in reforming the defects of my costume and language. I was no less obliged to her, as well as to several of my professors, in the article of poetical taste. I was a sincere admirer of works which were then in vogue. I wished to read some of them to her. I even hazarded several of my own compositions under an anonymous veil. I was at first listened to with indulgence. But my auditors soon ceased to spare the objects of my admiration. My poetical works were no better treated. I was quite confounded at seeing all that had appeared to me so fine, mangled by the dissecting-knife of criticism.

I had no better success with Gellert. He was eternally preaching against poetry. In his private lessons he constantly endeavoured to dissuade us



from it. He wished all compositions to be in prose. Verse appeared to him a very dull addition. But what was worse, my prose itself seldom met with his approbation. Faithful to my old style, I always gave my subject the form of an epistolary romance. I rose in these compositions to a passionate tone, and the style was elevated above common prose. Although the ideas certainly indicated no great knowledge of mankind, still my productions were no worse than those of others. But I met with very little indulgence from Gellert. He examined them carefully, corrected them with red ink, and wrote a few moral reflections here and there in the margin. I long preserved these sheets, with corrections and notes in his hand-writing, but they have at last disappeared from amongst my papers.

To accomplish the true end of teaching, it seems to me that, when persons, whose experience has been formed by age, are censuring the object of a young pupil's admiration, they should at the same moment set before him a model truly worthy of his admiration. Now every one declared against my inclinations and taste. But what they wished to substitute was either so remote from my ideas that I could not appreciate its merit, or seemed to me so hackneyed that I could not possibly regard it as of any value. All these obstacles perplexed me. I expected to

find a valuable guide in Ernesti; I attended his course on Cicero's book, *De Oratore*. The lessons of this celebrated philologist were useful to me, but did not afford me the light of which I was in search. What I wanted was sound and certain principles of criticism to direct my judgment. At length I conceived that this much wished for criterion was pretty much like the philosopher's stone, which all the world seeks, and nobody finds. Neither professors nor judges agreed amongst themselves, even with respect to the choice of models for imitation. Wieland, that charming writer, whose works were our delight, was then harassed by merciless and innumerable criticisms. How could we, then, possibly believe in any infallible rules?

Amidst all these peculiarities I took my place at the table of the counsellor Ludwig. He was a physician and a botanist. All his boarders, with the exception of the professor Morus, were students in physic. The conversation turned only on that science, and on natural history. I found myself suddenly transported into a new sphere. The names of Haller, Linnæus, and Buffon, were always pronounced with the expression of profound veneration; and even when a discussion arose respecting the errors attributed to those great men, the conclusion was always an homage to the superiority of their genius.

The interesting subjects that were discussed excited my attention. I learned by degrees a great number of definitions; I became familiar with the vocabulary of the sciences that engaged our attention, plunging eagerly into this study to preserve myself from the temptation to write verses. I also avoided reading poetry, that I might not have to blush for my admiration; for I no longer knew what I was to approve or what to censure; and this state of uncertainty in matters of taste and judgment at length rendered me very unhappy. I had brought to Leipsic such of my compositions as I considered the best. I was in hopes they would do me honour, and assist me in judging of the progress I made, by comparing my present works with my former writings. It was with inexpressible vexation that I found it necessary to become a new man, to give up my taste and literary opinions, and to condemn what I had approved! At length I began a severe examination of my works. After a long and painful struggle with my self-love, I cast a disdainful eye on all these works whether finished or only commenced. I made up a bundle of them, poetry, prose, plans, sketches, and schemes; I threw them all into the kitchen fire, and the smoke of my productions, filling the whole house, terrified our good hostess. Such was all the effect of the first efforts of my genius.

## CHAPTER VII.

So much has been written respecting the state of German literature at the period I have now reached, that those who interest themselves in this subject cannot surely stand in need of any new information. It may, however, afford a few observations not wholly devoid of interest; and those which I shall venture to offer will be made, not so much to complete the history of this literary period, as to give an idea of the impressions which I experienced. Let us in the first place draw the attention of the public to the two natural enemies of all liberty, and of all free and animated poetry, proceeding from a spontaneous impulse, that is to say, Satire and Criticism.

In time of peace every one is at liberty to follow the mode of life which he prefers. The merchant exercises his industry as he pleases, the shopkeeper minds his business, the author composes and publishes his works at his own pleasure. If he is not excited by the hope of gain, he is animated by the prospect of fame; and the hope of being useful also acts as a sti-

mulus to him. But satire and criticism suddenly break in to disturb the repose and security, the first of the citizen, and the second of the author. Anxieties, vexations, and quarrels, now succeed the peace which previously reigned in society.

This sort of hostility, carried on by the spirit of contradiction, distinguished the literary aspect of the period in which I was born. Germany had long been stifled, as it were, under the pressure of foreign influence, and subdued to the employment of foreign languages in the labours of her philosophers and diplomatists; she therefore seemed condemned to hopeless impotence, and excluded from all hope of bringing her vernacular idiom to perfection. A multitude of new ideas seemed to demand the importation of the exotic words which served to express them, and this habit of borrowing was carried to an unnecessary extent.

The Germans having been retained for almost two centuries, by a series of unfortunate events, in a semi-barbarous state, sought lessons of politeness in France, and the art of expressing themselves with propriety and dignity in the writers of ancient Rome. But the use of foreign modes of expression, corrupted by the effort to introduce them into the mother tongue, only exposed the German style to ridicule. The abuse of metaphors, figures familiar to the



southern nations, was carried to excess. There were scholars in the little German towns who adopted in their correspondence a tone of dignity suitable only to those Roman citizens who looked upon themselves as the equals of princes. It was absolutely a literary carnival.

The dawn of an indigenous literature had, however, begun to appear. People endeavoured to write German in a pure and natural style, without any mixture of foreign terms, and in an intelligible manner. These laudable efforts unfortunately opened the door to dull mediocrity. After the breaking down of the dyke the torrent overflowed. The four faculties remained obstinately and immoveably stuck in the quagmire of antiquated pedantry; and they had long trials to undergo previously to falling into pedantry of a new kind.

Liskow and Rabener pursued the career of satire with success. Liskow, who was carried off by a premature death, was a relentless enemy to bad writers; but he taught us nothing, except that ridicule was ridicule, which was pretty self-evident.

Rabener, who was equally esteemed and beloved for his personal qualities, applied satire to the vices and follies of the human species. His dart is without venom or bitterness; his censure is rather witty than severe; nor does even his irony indicate contempt. His talent displays

the serenity, frankness, and gentleness of his character.

If we look at the progress of criticism, and, in the first place, at the attempts to establish a theory of the arts, the first observation which presents itself is, that the ideal was at that period to be found only in religion: it scarcely appeared in any thing in the least degree connected with morals. No one suspected that the theory of the arts could not be discovered, without ascending to general principles with respect to each of them. Gottsched's Poetics were put into our hands: they contained the usual instruction, the history of the several kinds of poetry, a treatise on rhythm and prosody; but not a word respecting poetical genius. At last came the chef-d'œuvre of Horace, and we remained in ecstasies before this treasure of excellent advice. But we remained totally unacquainted with the talent of using it to advantage, in order to produce a complete work.  

It was in Switzerland that the first attempt was made to open a track to the nurselings of the Muses. Breitingen had published his Poetics, and opened a more extensive field. Unluckily he made nothing but a labyrinth of it.

All efforts to find fundamental principles for poetry had been fruitless. Its essence, too spiritual and volatile, always seemed to escape the grasp of theory. Painting, an art which the eye

may be said to endow with a character of fixity, and to follow step by step, appeared more pliant and docile. In France and England theories on the Fine Arts had already been published. Analogy suggested the attribution of the same principles to poetry. If the painter imitates to the eyes, it was said, the poet imitates to the imagination. He paints by the aid of descriptions and comparisons; he represents by words all that is susceptible of being represented to the senses. But if the poet is also a painter, where can he find his models except in nature? If painting is a simple imitation of nature, why should not poetry be so likewise? Yet nature cannot be imitated unreservedly. She presents many insignificant and vulgar objects. It is therefore necessary to select; but by what principle is the choice to be determined? If it be necessary to search for that which is worthy of imitation, by what token are we to recognize it?

The Swiss writers had, no doubt, long meditated on the solution of this problem. The explanation they gave is striking, on account of its singularity, which, to say the least, is ingenious.

According to their doctrine, that which most interests, and is most striking, is that which is new; and, to sum up their system, that which is newest is the marvellous. All the precepts of poetry were to terminate, therefore, in a general



rule. But it was observed that the marvellous might often be deficient in interest. It was necessary that it should always be connected with the nature of man; and consequently it was requisite that it should have a moral character. In fact, what could be the purpose of art, except improvement? Utility, as the necessary complement of all other kinds of merit, was therefore the essential attribute of poetry, the rule for estimating the respective merits of the various kinds of poetical composition. To whom was the pre-eminence amongst poets to be assigned? Undoubtedly to him who, in imitating nature in her marvellous features, best fulfils the indispensable condition of utility. After much dissertation, they at length persuaded themselves that this eminent rank was to be assigned to apologue.

Singular as such a conclusion may now appear to us, this idea nevertheless took a powerful hold of the strongest understandings. It was by the light of this flambeau that Gellert and Lichtwer walked; and afterwards Lessing himself for a considerable time. Many men of talent, taking this singular beacon for their guide, strengthened the confidence of those who believed in this system. Theory and practice lent mutual support to each other. Breitinger, a learned and able writer, of great sagacity, became, however, eventually sensible of the emptiness of his own

method. After having nearly completed his career, he returned to the primitive question. He asked himself whether the true object of poetry was not to depict manners, characters, and passions; in a word, the heart of man.

It is easy to form an idea of the confusion produced by such whimsical maxims, by rules so unintelligible, and precepts so complicated. Poetical theory, relying on precedents, made no farther progress. The German taste and ideas seemed to raise a wall of separation between us and other nations, or the ancients, which forbade us to seek our models abroad. As to the national writers, the best of them distinguished themselves by striking originality; but their successors knew not how to appropriate their beauties to themselves, and were fearful of imitating their irregularities. This was a distressing situation for all who were conscious of any creative talents.

It was not, in fact, talent that was wanting in German poetry, but a character, and particularly a national character. Amongst the writers who at that period gave proofs of true poetical genius, I will mention Günther, whose wild rudeness ought to be ascribed to the times in which he lived, to his mode of life, and above all, to the defects of his character.

Whilst I thus devoted myself to the study of our new literature, an unforeseen circumstance

occurred, which diverted my attention from more extensive research. This was the arrival at Leipzig of my countryman John George Schlosser. After having successfully concluded his course of academical studies, he had at first pursued the ordinary routine at Frankfort, and turned his attention to the bar; but that profession had proved insufficient to satisfy a mind eager for knowledge and information of every kind. He had accepted, without hesitation, the place of private secretary to Duke Louis of Wurtemberg, who then resided at Treptow. This prince was one of those great men who are desirous of true and personal glory, and who seek to obtain and diffuse information, in order to ameliorate the lot of their fellow-creatures. It was he who consulted Jean Jaques Rousseau, on the education of children, and to whom Rousseau addressed the well-known answer, beginning with this remarkable sentence, "If I had had the misfortune to be born a prince—."

Although Schlosser was neither the duke's intendant, nor governor to his children, he was very useful to him in discharging the duties of both those situations. This young man possessed a noble soul; his intentions were excellent, and his morals perfectly pure. A kind of severity, mingled with reserve, would have been thought repulsive in him, if his extraordinary literary erudition, his knowledge of languages, and the

facility with which he wrote both verse and prose, had not been extremely attractive, and rendered him an agreeable acquaintance. As soon as I heard he was at Leipsic, I went to see him. I had a profound esteem for his talents. Our characters were dissimilar, and this only rendered our friendship the more durable. He studied the English writers attentively. If Pope was not his model, he was at least his guide. The Essay on Man had suggested to him a poem intended as its counterpart. He had composed it in the same form and rhythm; its object was the triumph of Christianity over the English author's deism. He showed me many essays in verse and prose, written in various languages. These communications excited emulation in me. I set to work with great activity. I addressed several poems to him in German, French, English, and Italian. This afforded ample matter for our conversations, in which I found much to learn.

Schlosser wished to avail himself of his residence at Leipsic, in order to get acquainted with persons of celebrity. I introduced him to those whom I knew. We also visited some with whom I was not acquainted at that time. I shall never forget our introduction at Gottsched's; it was characteristic of the man. He lived in a handsome first floor at the Golden Bear; old Breitkoft had given him these apartments for life, in consideration of the benefits arising to his book-

selling business from the translations and other works of his guest.

We were announced. The servant told us his master would be with us immediately, and shewed us into a spacious room. Perhaps we did not comprehend a sign he made us. We thought he was directing us into an adjoining chamber, on entering which we witnessed a whimsical scene. Gottsched appeared at the same instant, at an opposite door. He was enormously corpulent. He wore a damask robe de chambre lined with red taffety. His monstrous bald head was bare, contrary to his intention, for his servant rushed in at the same instant by a side door, with a long wig in his hand, the curls of which descended below the shoulders. He presented it to his master with a trembling hand. Gottsched, with the greatest apparent serenity, took the wig with his left hand, with which he dexterously fitted it to his head, whilst with the right he gave the poor devil a most vigorous box on the ear, which sent him to the door in a pirouette, like a valet in a play; after which the old pedagogue, turning to us with an air of dignity, requested us to be seated, and conversed with us very politely for a considerable time. As long as Schlosser remained at Leipsic, I passed all my time with him; and at the table d'hôte he frequented I got acquainted with several pleasant companions, with whom I continued to associate after his

departure: these were Mr. Hermann, the son of a preacher to the court of Dresden, afterwards Burgomaster at Leipsic; his governor, counsellor Pfeil, author of the *Count de P—*; the companion to Gellert's Swedish Countess; Zachary, brother to the poet, and Krebel, author of a *Geographical and Genealogical Manual*. Another attraction which drew me into this company, was, that I was much pleased with the daughter of the people who kept the house, a very pretty girl, with whom I had often exchanged tender glances, an occupation which, since my unfortunate passion for Margaret, I had neither found nor sought. I passed the hours of our repast with my new friends in agreeable and useful conversation.

This society, conversation, example, and my own reflections, satisfied me that the first step to be taken in order to get rid of a barren copiousness and laxity of style, the prevailing defects at that period of our literary nullity, was to aim at precision, brevity, and positiveness in our ideas. Until then there had been little difference between the best style and ordinary language. There were, however, already some writers who had endeavoured to free themselves from this general complaint, with various degrees of success. Haller and Rammler were naturally fond of conciseness. Lessing and Wieland had adopted the same taste from reflection. The former

had gradually assumed an epigrammatic turn in his poetry. He had appeared concise and affecting in *Minna*, and laconic in *Emilia Galotti*; at a later period he returned to a gay and pleasing naïveté in *Nathan the Wise*. Wieland, who, in *Agatho*, *Don Sylvio*, and the *Comic Narrations*, had appeared a prolix writer, attained a high degree of precision in *Musarion* and *Idris*, without any diminution of grace. Klopstock, in the first cantos of the *Messiah*, is not exempt from diffuseness. In his odes and other little poems, as well as in his tragedies, he is concise. By continually endeavouring to rival the ancients, particularly Tacitus, he even became so brief and dense in his ideas and style, as to lose all the fruits of his labours by ceasing to be intelligible. Gerstenberg, a great but eccentric genius, may be said to be concentrated in himself. Although his merit is esteemed, he is not read with much pleasure. It was with difficulty that Gleim, who was naturally prolix, succeeded for once in point of conciseness, in his military songs. Rammler is more of a critic than a poet. He began with an attempt to form a collection of German lyric poems. Scarcely any of the pieces he selected met with his entire approbation. He rejected, corrected, and re-wrote. He gave new features to every poem. He thus made himself as many enemies as there are poets and amateurs; for every writer now found his defects

pointed out. As to the public, it prefers an original poem, with all its faults, to a poem thus mended according to the general rules of taste. Rhythmic poetry was then in its infancy, nor had any one discovered the means of accelerating its progress to maturity. Poetical prose was the fashion. Gessner and Klopstock had many imitators. To accommodate those who wished for verse, this prose was translated into a rhythmical shape. But these attempts were unsuccessful. The original prose was always preferred.

Of all our writers, Wieland was indisputably the one to whom nature had been most bountiful. He had early formed his mind in that ideal region in which youth delights to wander. But when what is called experience, that is to say, the events of life, had made him acquainted with the world, and with women, he attached himself to realities. He delighted in representing the struggle between these two different worlds; and his admirable muse, sometimes gay and sometimes grave, rendered the picture of this contest attractive and charming. Many of his brilliant productions appeared during the period of my academical studies. Musarion made a strong impression on me. I still remember the spot where I read this charming work. There it was that for the first time I thought I saw the antique spirit and forms revived. I identified myself with the unhappy Phantias



Timon. I partook of the misanthropy which his misfortunes led him into. I returned with him into the society of mankind, when he finally became reconciled to his daughter and the world.

The Germans were seeking in all directions for the light which they were sensible they stood in need of. Scarcely had any national subject been treated. Schlegel's Hermann, (Arminius) was the only remarkable work of that kind. There was an almost universal tendency to the idyl. Gessner's poems, although replete with grace and infantine sensibility, are devoid of originality. They want a physiognomy; and accordingly, every one fancied he could do the like. These poems described the sentiments common to all men. They depicted foreign manners, those of the Hebrew shepherds, and particularly those of the patriarchs. The poet had taken his colours from the Old Testament. Bodmer's Noachide was a stream from that spring which long inundated the German Parnassus. A crowd of ordinary poets were at the same time engaged in manufacturing poems which they called Anacreontic. Others, with as little success, amused themselves in aping the precision of Horace. The makers of heroi-comic poems in the manner of Pope, were equally unfortunate.

It is here that I must notice an illusion, the extreme absurdity of which did not prevent its mischievous influence. Gottsched's treatise on poetry had made known to the Germans all the kinds of poetry by which other nations had become celebrated. His advice excited the genius of all our poets to compose in each of these styles. It was thought that every poem constructed from a known model, must necessarily be a masterpiece. Of course, it appeared to him that nothing could be easier than to produce them. He did not perceive that this imitative mania was at variance with the very nature of poetry. The new system proceeded with great activity. The collection of the wonders of our Parnassus grew every year more extensive; but, at the same time, each succeeding wonder drove its predecessor from the shop which it had illumined. The docile pupils of Gottsched confessed that we did not, as yet, possess a Homer; but, according to them, we had at least one Virgil, and one Milton. We were still looking for a Pindar, but we possessed one Horace, and many a Theocritus. The poetical mass daily swelled in bulk, with accumulated works worthy to enter into competition with the classical masterpieces: according to certain persons, we should soon have to take the productions of our country as the ob-

jects of our emulation. It will be inferred, that if we were in the true path of taste, we walked very unsteadily in it.

At the same time, the study of what is called the human understanding, engaged much attention. The school philosophy was falling into disuse. That philosophy had had the merit of employing determined forms, and fixed rules and methods in the discussion of the grand questions which have interested mankind in all ages ; but the obscurity, vagueness, and emptiness of its solutions, unfortunately two obvious, had brought them into disrepute. Many people persuaded themselves that nature had furnished them with sufficient sense to enable them to form a clear idea of the various objects that present themselves to our notice, without laying them under the necessity of troubling themselves about general ideas, or ascertaining the order of the universe. They thought it sufficient to cast an observing eye around them, and to employ their attention and industry on objects immediately connected with and interesting to them. This direction of the mind authorized every one to philosophize. No one was now excluded from a career which was formerly shut to the profane. Any man, with time and reflection, might pretend to the title of philosopher, because all was now reduced to a more or less sound, or exercised understanding ; he

might also ascend by degrees to general ideas, and concern himself more or less successfully, by the aid of experimental intelligence, in all that passes within and without us. Men now prescribed to themselves the rule of holding the balance even between all opinions. Strong in this spirit of moderation, and with a marvellous sagacity in elucidating common ideas, the writers and followers of this new school attained consideration and acquired confidence ; accordingly, philosophy introduced itself rapidly into every branch of science and literature, and into all ranks and classes of society.

In pursuing this path, theologians themselves could not long avoid meeting with that of the religion called natural. It necessarily became a question, whether the light afforded by nature would render us capable of perceiving a God, and of improving and ennobling our nature. This question was decided in the affirmative without much hesitation. Constantly adhering to the moderate principles they had adopted, the new philosophers acknowledged all positive religions as equally entitled to respect ; that is to say, they allowed them to be all equally good, but denied that any one was more certain than the rest. They permitted the edifice of religion to remain. They acknowledged all the importance and merit of the Bible : they found in it a store of observations, reflections on our origin, nature,

sentiments, and duties, more pure and rich than in any other book. To this book, therefore, in preference to any other religious code, was allowed the privilege of serving as the foundation of our belief.

But even this sacred code was destined to share the fate in which the lapse of time involves every profane work. It had hitherto been an article of faith, that this book of books had been conceived with a peculiar design, inspired and dictated by the Holy Spirit. But the obvious inequalities of its various parts had, however, long been the subject of warm controversies between the orthodox and the unbelievers.

English, French, and German writers had all attacked or defended the Bible with more or less warmth, perspicacity, hardihood, or courage. But the most authoritative men and best thinkers in each of these countries had again declared themselves its defenders. To me, personally, this book was an object of love and respect: and I was indebted to it, almost exclusively, for my moral culture. The events, precepts, symbols, and allegories it contained, were profoundly engraven on my mind. I was shocked at the unjust attacks, and the ridicule which had been directed against it.

These had, nevertheless, induced part of the faithful to accept cordially, as the foundation of an apology for many biblical passages, the idea

that God had thought proper to accommodate himself to the understanding and opinions of men; that the prophets, although inspired by the Holy Spirit, had not relinquished their personal characters; and that hence, the language, for instance, of Amos, the driver of cattle, was of course very different from that of Isaiah, a man of princely birth.

From all these ideas naturally arose an inclination to a new species of study, which was much promoted by the modern progress in the study of languages; men applied themselves to a profound study of the localities, the characteristic peculiarities, the natural productions, and other phenomena of the East, endeavouring by these means to render themselves familiar with the ancient world. Michaelis devoted to these researches the whole power of his talents, the whole extent of his knowledge. Descriptions, taken from ancient travellers, became powerful auxiliaries in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures; and modern travellers, setting out provided with numerous questions, were sure to testify in favour of the prophets and apostles by the answers they furnished.

Every endeavour was used to present the sacred books to us in a light suitable to our natural faculties, so as to render the sense of them intelligible to the ordinary classes of mankind. It was hoped, that by the aid of these historical and cri-

tical interpretations, many objections would be removed; that every thing which seemed revolting at the first glance would disappear; and that all the attacks of empty raillery would thenceforth be futile. Some writers directed their views to an opposite point: selecting the books most abundant in obscurities and mysteries, they attempted by means of calculations and conjectures, and all the combinations suggested by their profound meditations, if not to clear up the difficulties, at least to strengthen faith, to prove the prophecies by the series of subsequent events, and to justify the belief of the faithful in the future events which they announced.

The efforts of the worthy Bengel to explain the book of Saint John, were partly indebted for their success to the reputation this venerated professor enjoyed for sound sense, uprightness, and piety; in a word, he was an irreproachable character. Minds of vast profundity feel a longing to exist at the same time in the past and in the future. The ordinary course of the events of this world would seem to them insignificant, did not the march of time, up to the present moment, reveal to them the sense which was formerly wrapped in the ancient prophecies; and were they not to endeavour to raise the veil of the most distant, as well as the nearest futurity, which still conceals the predictions of sages. From these efforts result a concatenation

tion of causes and effects which it would be in vain to seek in history; which seems only to show us a succession of fortuitous movements and oscillations, inclosed in a circle traced by necessity. Doctor Crusius was one of those who attached themselves in preference to the prophecies contained in the sacred books, because they exercise at the same time the two most opposite faculties of man, sensibility and penetration. A multitude of young students attended his lessons. This excited the more attention, as Ernesti and his disciples threatened not only to enlighten the obscurity so dear to the school of Crusius, but to disperse its darkness entirely. Hence much agitation, animosity, and persecution. I was one of the partisans of light. I endeavoured to imbibe the principles and information of the enlightened system, although I was not blind to the fact that this method of interpretation, although highly laudable as conducive to the progress of reason, would be calculated to strip the sacred books both of their poetical aspect and their prophetic character.

Next to these superior men, who laboured so zealously to promote the national literature and the belles-lettres in general, the efforts of the Jerusalems, Zollikoffers, and Spaldings were conspicuous. Their sermons, their dissertations on religion and morality, which are so closely united, written with great purity of style, were



admired by all persons of understanding and taste. The want of an agreeable diction began to be felt. The first thing requisite was to be intelligible. Writers arose on every side, whose studies and professions had accustomed them to make themselves understood, to be clear and explicit, and to acquire the approbation both of the multitude and of the learned.

The physicians, stimulated by Tissot, a foreigner, also began to contribute with zeal to the cultivation of German literature. Haller, Unzer, and Zimmermann, attained great influence: it may be said of them all three, and of the last in particular, that they were very useful to their contemporaries. History and literary biography will record the services they rendered: for a man deserves to be celebrated, not only for the works he leaves behind him, but for his activity, and the activity which he excites in others by the enjoyment he procures them.

The lawyers, habituated from youth to an abstract style, which had perpetuated itself under the most whimsical forms in the affairs of which they treated, from the times of chivalry to the diet of Ratisbon, found it very difficult to disengage themselves from these trammels. It was not easy for them to assume a certain freedom, because the matters which occupied them were strictly confined in the bonds of the received style and forms. Nevertheless young Moser had distinguished himself by a free manner of writing.

peculiar to himself. Pütter, by the perspicuity of his mode of teaching, had introduced a suitable degree of light into the subjects of his lessons, and the style appropriated to those subjects. All those who came out of his school were remarkable for these qualities: even the philosophers found it necessary to write in a comprehensible style, if they wished to become popular. Mendelssohn and Garve appeared, and obtained universal approbation and attention.

The progress of scientific criticism kept up with that of the national language and style. Several analyses of works on religious, moral, and medical subjects, that were published at this period, are still admired. Criticism, on the contrary, when applied to poetry or to any other branch of the belles-lettres, was, if not absolutely contemptible, at least extremely weak. This may be said with equal truth of the Literary Correspondence, of the General German Library, and of the Library of the Belles-Lettres\*. It would be easy to prove these assertions by examples.

It was to Frederick the Great, and the exploits of the seven years' war, that the German Muse was indebted for a true and elevated expression, and an original and living character. All national poetry is necessarily colourless, unless it is attached to what most strongly interests the

\* German Journals of that period.

citizen, to the events which concern a nation, and to the great men who direct its energies. The poet should represent kings in wars and dangers: in these they shine in the first rank, deciding and sharing the fate of others. In these scenes they interest us more than the gods of antiquity themselves; for although those superior beings are made to determine our destinies, they are not partakers in our risks. It is in this sense that every nation that would be of any intrinsic value, stands in need of epic poetry; the success of which does not always depend upon a strict observance of the rules and forms prescribed for this kind of composition.

Gleim's war songs have attained an elevated place on the German Parnassus, because they sprang out of the bosom of events; and also, from their favourable form, which, shewing us the poet in the midst of the combatants at the moment of the greatest danger, produces a lively impression and the most perfect illusion.

Rammeler also sings the actions of his king in a tone full of dignity: the animated colouring of his poetry delights, and the great and affecting subjects he treats interest us. Accordingly their merit will long survive the events from which they arose. The principle and end of art reside in the essence of the object on which it is exercised. Who can deny that genius and cultivated talent possess the faculty of vivifying

whatever they touch, and conquering the most rebellious subject. But how happy it is for art, when the subject is worthy of the artist's talents !

The Prussians, and all protestant Germany thus found a treasure for their literature of which the opposite party was destitute, and the want of which no efforts have hitherto been able to supply. The high opinion which the Prussian writers had of their king, the zeal which animated them in his cause, were only increased by the circumstance that this king, in whose name all was done, actually would not hear of this literary improvement. Previously to his time the French colony of refugees had introduced into Prussia the spirit and manners of their country, which afterwards continued to extend their influence through his predilection for the civilization and financial systems of France ; and these circumstances were extremely favourable to the development of the national faculties in Germany, which could not make their way but by struggling against the most formidable obstacles. Thus Frederick's aversion to the German language was favourable to the progress of the national literature. Every thing was done to attract the king's notice ; but nothing for the sake of obtaining his applause, or even his approbation. What was performed was done in the German fashion, from internal conviction : it was

done because it was considered right to do it. It was wished that the king should recognize and confirm the claims of his nation to esteem. But nothing of the kind happened or could happen. It was not to be expected that a king, who was anxious to live in the enjoyment of refined mental pleasures, should lose his time in seeking gratification in a language and literature which he had pronounced barbarous, and the improvement of which came too late for him.

There is one work in particular of which I must here take notice, as a natural product of the seven years' war, and as the most faithful expression of the aspect of the North of Germany at this period. It was the first theatrical composition taken from the remarkable events of life, and which expressed the characteristic physiognomy of the moment. I allude to *Minna of Barnhelm*. Unlike Klopstock and Gleim, Lessing used readily to lay aside all personal dignity, being certain of his power to resume it at pleasure. He delighted in the dissipated life which prevails in taverns and other social haunts; he used it as a counterpoise to the indefatigable activity of his mind. He had been one of those who surrounded General Tauenzien. In the piece I have just mentioned, it is easy to recognize the contention between war and peace, hate and love. This production was useful in bringing forward the art beyond the literary and civic

world to which it had been confined, and introducing a more elevated and brilliant world to its contemplations.

The conclusion of the war had not put an end to that violent animosity which had inflamed the Prussians and Saxons against each other during its continuance. The people of Saxony deeply resented the mortifications they had suffered from the pride of the Prussians. The peace, effected by policy, had not reconciled their irritated minds. Lessing's work was intended to contribute to the restoration of that union of which it presented the image. The grace and loveliness of a Saxon woman triumphs, in his piece, over the proud and vain spirit of a Prussian; and the art of the poet, faithful to its object, restores the principal as well as the inferior characters to a good understanding, and thus harmonizes discordant elements.

I am apprehensive that these hasty and incoherent remarks on German literature may have fatigued the reader. I am, however, fortunate if I have succeeded in imparting an idea of the chaos in which my poor brain was bewildered in the midst of the contest between the two very remarkable periods of our literary annals; when so many new ideas were operating upon me, and before I had been able to free myself completely from the yoke of antiquated ideas, whatever reasons I might see for throwing it off. I will en-

deavour to point out the path I pursued to extricate myself from this perplexity.

My infancy and youth had coincided with the period of our literary licentiousness. I had passed that interval in writing with great assiduity, and in the society of many persons of merit. The numerous manuscripts I had left with my father were sufficient proofs of my industry. I had reduced to ashes a great mass of essays, projects, and half-executed plans, rather from discouragement than from conviction of their worthlessness. The conversations I was engaged in, the lessons I heard, the contests of various opinions— but, above all, the advice of one of our society, counsellor Pfeil,—taught me to set a higher value on two things : first, the importance and interest of the subject ; and next, the conciseness of the style. I was, however, still ignorant, both where to find these subjects, and how to attain this conciseness. The confined circle in which I moved, the indifference of my companions in study, the insufficiency of my masters, the want of intercourse with such of the inhabitants as were distinguished for mental cultivation, the perfect insignificance of the nature that surrounded me, all compelled me to seek my resources in myself. If I wished to find some real inspiration—some profound sentiment, some just and striking reflections for my poetical compositions, I saw that I must draw them from my own bosom. When I

felt it necessary, for my descriptions, to have the objects and events before my eyes, I avoided overstepping the circle of those objects which were capable of inspiring me with a direct interest. It was in this manner that I commenced by writing a few little poems in the lyric form. They sprang from the reflection or feelings of the moment, and under my pen almost always assumed the epigrammatic turn.

Thus I took the direction from which, throughout life, I have never deviated. I accustomed myself to describe, and turn into poetry, whatever deeply interested me; whatever had caused me a strong sensation of joy or grief. I acquired a habit of self-concentration, either to rectify my ideas respecting external objects, or to restore my mind to tranquillity. To no one could this faculty be more necessary than to me, whom my natural disposition drove from one extreme to another. All that I have made known on this subject forms only fragments of a long confession which I am endeavouring to make in this book.

The attachment I had felt for Margaret I had transferred to the daughter of our host, named Annette. I have nothing to say of her, but that she was young, pretty, lively, and affectionate. Her disposition was so sweet, her mind so pure, that she deserved the love and veneration due to a saint.

I saw her uninterruptedly every day. Our



company at the *table d'hôte* was confined to a few persons known to the master of the house, whose wife was a Frankfort woman. They received very few people except during the fair. Annette and I had many opportunities of conversing together, of which we took advantage with mutual pleasure. As she was not permitted to go out, her diversions and amusements were very few. We used to sing some of Zachary's songs together; we played Kruger's Duke Michael; and thus our time glided on. But the more innocent connexions of this kind are, the less variety of impressions is there to prolong their duration. I accordingly fell into that evil disposition of mind which often misleads us so far as to make us find a pleasure in tormenting those whom we love; and I abused the fondness of a young female by tyrannical and arbitrary caprices. Secure of the affection of Annette, and of her anxiety to please me, I vented on her all the ill-humour that the failure of my poetical essays, the apparent impossibility of doing myself honour by them, and every thing else that occurred to vex me, excited. I poisoned our best days by groundless and unworthy jealousies. She long endured all these follies with angelic patience; but I had the cruelty to tire it out. To my shame and despair, I at length perceived that her heart was alienated from me; and that I had now real cause for all the extravagances I had

been guilty of without reason. This discovery gave rise to terrible scenes between us; but all that I gained by them was to learn for the first time how much I loved, and how necessary her affection was to me. My passion, however, increased, assuming all the forms which such situations produce. It was now my turn to act the part of this amiable girl: I used all my endeavours to regain her by agreeable diversions. I could not bear to relinquish all hopes of her return to me; but it was too late. Struck with remorse for my conduct towards her, I avenged her by torturing myself with my own follies. The furious despair by which I thought to awaken her compassion, overcame my physical strength. These extravagances greatly contributed to the bodily anguish by which I lost some of the best years of my life; and perhaps these complaints would speedily have terminated my existence, had not my poetical vein come to my assistance, and restored my enfeebled health.

Already, during several intervals, I had clearly perceived my folly. When restored to myself I deplored my injustice towards Annette, and the sufferings I had caused her. So often, and in so lively a manner, did I represent to myself all the circumstances of her situation and my own, comparing them with the peace and happiness enjoyed by another couple in our society.

that at length I could not resist the desire to make this contrast the subject of a drama, for the instruction of lovers, and in expiation of my folly. This was the origin of the oldest of those of my dramatic works which have been preserved; the title of which is: *The Caprices of a Lover*. It is a faithful picture of the affliction caused to an innocent being by an ardent passion. But I was already acquainted with the miseries of social life: my adventure with Margaret, and the consequences of that connexion, had opened my eyes to the strange irregularities that are to be found in the bosom of civil society. Religion, morality, the laws, the influence of profession, habitual relations, and custom—all these things rule its surface only. In a town, the streets embellished with fine houses are carefully kept clean: every one behaves in them with tolerable decency. But penetrate into the interior, and you will often find in them a disorder which seems the more disgusting from the neatness that prevails without. A dazzling stucco on the outside, scarcely conceals walls that are ready to fall in ruins. At length, some night, down they come, with a crash which seems the more terrible, on account of the tranquil repose amidst which it suddenly happens. How many families, more or less connected with me, have I already seen either precipitated into the abyss, or with diffi

culty preserving themselves on the brink of the precipice, towards which they have been hurried by bankruptcies, divorces, rapes, robberies, and murders! Young as I was, how often in such cases has my aid been resorted to! for my open manner already inspired confidence. My discretion had been tried. No sacrifice alarmed my zeal, and I was capable of rendering myself useful in the most perilous circumstances. I had often had opportunities of appeasing or averting a storm, and of rendering all kinds of good offices. I had been exercised by numerous and painful trials, caused by events which interested others or myself. These events furnished me with subjects and plans for dramatic compositions: I sketched several of them; but I found it by far too painful a task to complete them. As they all necessarily terminated in a gloomy and tragical manner, I abandoned them all one after another. The *Accomplices* was the only one I finished. The gay and burlesque colouring which mingles with family scenes of a dark hue, enlivens a representation which, on the whole, leaves a sorrowful impression. Acts of violation of the laws, represented in their true character of rude violence, annihilate the sentiment of the beautiful, and that of morality. It is this which generally excludes such productions from the theatre, although they have sometimes been favourably received by the pub-

lic, where these circumstances have been softened.

Yet these dramatic pieces were composed under the influence of more elevated views, although I did not analyse those motives whilst engaged in their production. They tend to produce sentiments of tolerance in the moral account which men are destined to render. They illustrate in a forcible manner those truly Christian words, "Let him who is without sin cast " the first stone."

This melancholy, which spread so gloomy a colouring over my early productions, might find an excuse in plausible motives, decidedly inherent in my disposition. In fact, the severe and terrible trials I had passed through, seemed to have developed a daring character in me. Instead of being fearful of dangers, I delighted in braving them. The principle of this disposition of the mind is the petulance natural to youth, the playful sallies of which excite gaiety.

This temerity of character, presented on the stage judiciously and skilfully, produces the greatest effect: it is distinguished from intrigue by being instantaneous, and having for its object, when it has any object, only the effect of the moment. Beaumarchais thoroughly comprehended this source of interest, which is the principal cause of the success of his Figaro. When this audacity, which always has a pleasing side,

is employed on a noble subject, and exercised at the risk of life, the situations it produces, elevated by sentiments of grandeur, are of the highest theatrical interest. This is proved by the opera of *The Water-Carrier*; the most favourable subject, perhaps, that was ever treated.

A short time had sufficed to produce a remarkable change in my daily habits. Madame Boëhme had fallen a victim to a long and afflicting illness. Her husband was not well satisfied with me; he considered me deficient in application and seriousness. He found that, instead of listening attentively to his lectures on the public law of Germany, I amused myself with caricaturing the personages whom he had occasion to quote—judges, presidents, and assessors in ridiculous dresses, in the margin of my notebook. By these buffooneries I had also distracted the attention of my neighbours. He took the jest very ill. Since the loss of his wife, he lived more secluded than ever. At length I used to avoid him, in order to escape his reproaches. The worst of it was, that Gellert would not make use of the power he might have exercised over us. He was, indeed, far from having time to play the part of confessor, and to enquire into every one's conduct and faults; and he only noticed these subjects when he addressed us in a body. He thought to influence us by

acting the priest. When we were assembled before him, he would ask us, inclining his head and speaking in a whining but agreeable voice, whether we went regularly to church; to whom we confessed our sins; and whether we had been partakers of the Sacrament. When the result of this examination was not favourable to us, he used to quit us after much lamentation. We were left rather dejected than encouraged; but this did not prevent our loving this excellent man with all our hearts.

Religion, as consecrated by public worship, cannot penetrate the inmost soul, unless all the parts of the religious system are consistent, lend mutual support to each other, and form a perfect whole. The protestant worship possesses none of these advantages. The void, the breaks, and the want of harmony that pervade it, are too sensible. Hence the facility with which its professors separate from each other. The progressive diminution of the number of those who frequented the church and the communion-table, had long been complained of. Let us examine into the causes of this growing indifference.

The moral and religious part of life resembles the physical and civil part. Man does not act voluntarily and impromptu. What he is to do, he must be brought and in some measure constrained to do, by a series of acts, the result of which is habit. What he is wished to love

and practise, he must not be left to think on alone and separately. Sacraments are the most exalted mysteries of religion. They are the sensible symbols of a favour, an extraordinary grace of the Divinity. The protestant worship has too few sacraments. Strictly speaking it has but one ; that is to say, the communion : for baptism, to which the party receiving it is always a stranger, can hardly be called one. It is only known by seeing it administered. But such a sacrament as the communion cannot exist in an insulated state. Where is the Christian capable of fully enjoying the benefits of the Lord's Supper, if its symbolical or sacramental meaning has not been kept up in his mind ?—if he is not accustomed to regard the union of the internal religion of the heart with the external religion of the church, as one whole, as a perfect harmony, a sublime and universal sacrament, which is divided into several symbols, to each of which it communicates its sanctity ?

Has not protestantism destroyed this harmony, by rejecting most of these symbols as apocryphal, and admitting only a very small number of them ? Was indifference with regard to one, likely to accustom us to respect the high dignity of the rest.

In my religious education, I had at first evinced zeal and application. My piety was sincere. But when I found that the worthy man who



instructed us, constantly mumbled over his lessons as old forms to which his heart and mind were utter strangers, my zeal cooled, and for the first time I approached the sacred table with lukewarmness. I afterwards recollected the menaces pronounced against unworthy communicants. I was fearful, like many others, that I had received my own condemnation, instead of divine grace. Agitated by these painful scruples, I no sooner arrived at Leipsic, than, in order to free myself from them, I resolved to abstain from going to church.

Gellert had drawn up a course of morality according to his pious inspirations, which from time to time he read in public. His writings had long been the foundation of moral culture in Germany. The printing of this new work was anxiously looked for; and, as it was not to be published until after the death of the worthy professor, it was considered a piece of good fortune to hear him read it. The auditory was always full. The purity of his sentiments, the benevolence which animated his noble soul, his exhortations, his advice, and his somewhat melancholy tone, made a strong impression on his auditors. But this impression was far from lasting. A great number of critics, considering his manner adapted to soften and enervate, made a point of decrying it. I remember a French traveller, who wished to make himself acquaint-

ed with the maxims and opinions of this professor, whose lessons attracted so great a concourse. When they had been explained to him, "Let him alone," said he, shaking his head and laughing: "he is forming dupes for us."

The influence of personal dignity being far from agreeable to what was called good company, those who came under that denomination were continually endeavouring to weaken Gellert's ascendancy over us. Sometimes they blamed him for paying more attention to the instruction of the wealthy young Danes that were especially recommended to him, than to that of the other students. His marked predilection for them was found fault with. Sometimes he was accused of egotism and nepotism, for having sent these youths to board with his brother. The latter, an old fencing-master, often treated his noble guests very rudely. This was ascribed to Gellert's excessive indulgence towards his brother.

The elector had made the worthy professor a present of a horse, that he might procure himself, by the exercise of riding, the motion necessary to his health; and Gellert's enemies could scarcely forgive his Highness this mark of attention.

Thus, by degrees, did every species of authority lose its weight in my mind. Even my admi-

ration for him who had appeared to me the greatest of men, was lessened, and almost extinguished.

I had always regarded Frederick II. as superior to the most remarkable men of the age. It therefore appeared to me very extraordinary to find the inhabitants of Leipsic as little disposed to listen to his praises as my grandfather and his family. The iron hand of war had indeed oppressed them. They could not, therefore, be blamed for not looking with a favourable eye on him who had so long made them feel its rigours. But whilst they acknowledged that he possessed eminent qualities, they disputed his claim to the title of a great man. It did not require, said they, extraordinary abilities to succeed with extensive means. An object may easily be attained when neither country, money, nor blood are spared. According to them Frederic had not proved himself great, either by his plans or by the object he had proposed to himself. As often as he had undertaken the direction of operations, he had committed faults. It was only when under the necessity of finding a remedy for these errors, that he had shewn himself an extraordinary man. It was thus that he had acquired a great reputation, owing to that sentiment natural to all men, who, being subject to the frequent commission of errors, admire him most who is most skilful in repairing them. In examining the progress of the

seven years' war, step by step, it appeared that the king had sacrificed his excellent army to no purpose ; by which error he had prolonged that disastrous struggle. A truly great man, or commander, would have brought this contest with the enemy to a much earlier termination. These opinions were supported by an infinite number of particulars which I could not dispute. Thus was gradually undermined the unlimited veneration which from infancy I had vowed to this illustrious prince.

Amongst the individuals with whom I was acquainted at Leipsic, one of those who have left the most distinct traces in my memory was the governor of the young Count Lindenau. His name was Behrisch. He might be classed amongst the most singular originals. At a very early hour in the morning he was always to be seen with his hair dressed and powdered, a sword by his side, and his hat under his arm. He might have passed for a Frenchman of the old school ; particularly as he spoke and wrote French with great facility. He was perfectly acquainted with modern languages and literature. To a great share of learning, and astonishing apathy, he added a decided talent and taste for buffooneries, which he executed practically or verbally with the greatest seriousness. He excelled as a mimic ; he would imitate passengers, and give an opinion of their characters

from their air, appearance, gait, and deportment. He wrote a very fine hand, and was fond of copying manuscripts; which he did with extraordinary neatness, adorning them with pretty vignettes, of which he often invented the subjects. In this manner he did me the honour to copy some of my poetical effusions. He never neglected an opportunity of expressing a comic antipathy to the art of printing. All these singularities, however, did not prevent his performing his duty towards his young pupil with scrupulous care. But he had enemies. Unfortunately for him he went sometimes, and had introduced me and some of my fellow-students, to a house which was the residence of certain ladies whose characters were worse than they merited, and with whom our acquaintance could do us no honour in the estimation of the public. He was also accused of having participated in the composition of some satirical verses written in our little society against a piece entitled *Medo*, by Professor Clodius, Gellert's deputy. I was the author of one of these epigrams. All this was reported to the father of his pupil, and Behrisch was discharged. This circumstance, however, proved advantageous to him. His prepossessing appearance, knowledge, accomplishments, and irreproachable probity had gained him the esteem and good-will of many persons of distinction; through whose recommendation he obtained the place of

governor to the hereditary prince of Hesse-Darmstadt, and was thus established in a comfortable and permanent situation at the court of an excellent prince.

I felt the loss of Behrisch severely. He knew how to deal with my capricious temper, constantly fluctuating between the extremes of sadness and petulance. He attracted me to himself, and formed my character. His presence was necessary to me in society, where he possessed the art of rendering me supportable. But my social character had not yet acquired sufficient consistency. Accordingly, after his departure, I soon relapsed into my eccentricities; and became once more dissatisfied with others, because I thought them discontented with me. My misbehaviour estranged from me several of those with whom I had lived on pretty good terms. I was always either troublesome or negligent; and did either too much or too little. My blunders produced unpleasant consequences either to others or to myself. There was but one opinion, even amongst those who were my well-wishers, on the subject of my total want of knowledge of the world and experience. I endeavoured to discover what this knowledge and experience, in which I was said to be deficient, could be; but without success. This idea fixed upon my brain. The desire to gain information on this subject became a passion, a mania, in my mind. There

happened to be an officer of my acquaintance, who was highly spoken of as a man of great understanding and experience. He had served throughout the seven years' war, and acquired the confidence of every one. It was extremely easy for me to consult him, as we often walked out together. I openly and ingenuously imparted my perplexity to him: he laughed at it; and was kind enough to relate to me a few anecdotes of his life, and of the world in which he had lived, by way of answering my questions. All that I could gather from it, to the best of my comprehension, was nearly this: that we learn by experience that it is a folly to hope for the accomplishment of our wishes, our dearest projects, our best ideas; and that whoever suffers himself to be caught by such baits, and warmly expresses his hopes, is considered as singularly devoid of experience. My Mentor confessed, however, that he himself had not yet renounced every folly; and that he still retained that of love and hope, without finding himself much the worse for it. I learned from him many interesting particulars of the seven years' war, and of the preceding state of the court of Saxony. He related numerous anecdotes of the surprising bodily strength of King Augustus II.; of the great number of his children; of his successor's passion for the fine arts, and collections of pictures: of Count Bruhl; his unbounded magnificence; his buildings,

which often indicated but little taste: and of all the pompous entertainments suddenly interrupted by Frederic's invasion of Saxony. These accounts made a very singular impression upon me. All those fine royal mansions were destroyed, all Count Bruhl's splendour annihilated. Out of all those proofs of pomp and luxury, nothing now remained but a country in a state of desolation, although truly magnificent.

When my Mentor perceived the astonishment which this insensate use of good fortune excited in me, and the concern I felt for the calamities which had followed it, he told me that I must not be surprised at any thing, nor take it too much to heart. But I felt it a happiness to preserve my inexperience a little longer: I told him so; he encouraged my inclination, advising me to confine myself as much as possible to experience of an agreeable kind.



## CHAPTER VIII.

ANOTHER person to whom I was then under many obligations was Oëser, director of the academy of drawing established in the old mansion of Pleissenberg, where he resided. The first room in his apartments was adorned with pictures by the Italian masters of the new school, the grace of which he admired greatly. In this room I took private lessons of him, with some young noblemen : he allowed us to draw there. He designed engravings for several works with great talent. The vignettes which adorn Winkelman's early writings were engraved by him. All his compositions were distinguished by peculiar gracefulness.

The new theatre built at this period excited great attention. The curtain had a very pleasing effect. Oëser had brought the Muses from the clouds, in which they are usually placed, and caused them to descend to earth. This curtain exhibited the peristyle of the Temple of Glory, decorated with the statues of Sophocles and Aristophanes, round which were assembled the modern dramatic poets. Farther off, on the same plan,

were seen the goddesses of the arts. All in these groups was in a fine style. But what excited surprise was the figure of a man slightly clothed, in the back ground of the picture, advancing towards the portal of the temple, in the space which remained vacant between the two groups, of which he seemed to take no notice. He turned his back on the spectators. He was not distinguished by any remarkable characteristic. But who could fail to discover that it was Shakespeare; who, without predecessor or follower, without regarding any model, passed on towards immortality with a firm and certain step?

My progress in the practice of the art was but slow. But many subjects treated by the artist awakened my poetical talents. I composed poems for engravings as many others designed engravings for poems. I thus accustomed myself to consider these two arts in their mutual relations. We devoted ourselves with assiduous zeal to the study of theoretical works on the fine arts. The researches of the most celebrated amateurs of France and Germany occupied us no less seriously. The rivals of Caylus, Christ, Heinecke, and Lippert, were so many oracles whom we took pleasure in consulting. Our thoughts followed our illustrious countryman Winkelman into Italy, whilst he there consecrated his life to the arts, with so much honour to himself. We read his early writings with respect.

Oëser had found it easy to communicate to us his passionate admiration of this great genius. There were a few enlightened amateurs at Leipzig, whose acquaintance was also highly useful to us. Hüber, a connoisseur of approved taste, was one of them. His collection of engravings pleased us highly. Another merit which he had in our eyes, was that of having made the French sensible of the value of German literature.\*

Thus I neglected the object for which my family had sent me to the university, and the plans of study which I had laid down for myself: but I was gaining a knowledge of the arts, to which I have been indebted for the happiest moments of my life. When a young man has acquired knowledge hastily and from the conversation of learned men, he has yet the most difficult task to perform; that of reducing to order in his head what he has only learnt flying, as it may be said. We anxiously sought a torch, to guide us by its light. This torch was presented to us by a man to whom we were already under great obligations.

With what joy did we hail this luminous ray which a thinker of the first order suddenly struck out from clouds of darkness! All the fire of youth would be requisite to conceive the effect which Lessing's *Laocoon* produced upon us, when that

\* As the translator of Gessner, Winkelman, Hagedorn, &c.—ED.

work first drew us out of the regions of barren contemplation, to launch us into the free and fertile field of thought. The long misunderstood adage of "*Ut pictura poësis*" was at length elucidated. The difference between the art of painting and that of writing was at length rendered obvious. It was seen that, although the bases of these arts might touch each other, their summits were distinct and separate. In fact, it is in vain that the painter envies the poet the faculty of seizing and characterizing all objects, and of overstepping the limits of the beautiful: these limits will nevertheless remain the line of demarcation which painting cannot pass; for its object is to satisfy the eye, which nothing but the beautiful can delight. The poet, on the contrary, labours for the imagination; which, although it repels odious objects themselves, does not object to their representation. A single glance, like a flash of lightning, revealed to us all the consequences of this magnificent thought. All the superannuated criticism, which had formerly been the only guide of our judgments and reflections, was now thrown aside like a worn-out garment. Delivered from these trammels, we looked with an eye of compassion on the pictures and poetry of the sixteenth century, in which life, death, and the evils which necessity or chance inflict on the world, were represented under the most ridiculous forms.

Thought and contemplation afford each other mutual assistance. Whilst I studied the *Laocoon*, I felt the strongest desire to see, at least once in my life, a great number of remarkable monuments of art collected together. I soon determined on a journey to Dresden. From one of the singularities of my character, I communicated this journey to no one. I wished to look about me freely, and to consult only my own impressions. I inherited from my father a decided aversion to lodging at inns. I went to a shoemaker's, cousin to the theologian near whose apartment I lodged at Leipsic. The letters of my new host to his relation had always appeared to me full of sense, wit, and good humour. He was poor and content. I was curious to have a nearer view of a practical philosopher, a sage unconscious of being one. I had every reason to be pleased with his character and attentions, as well as those of his wife.

The day after my arrival at Dresden I waited with impatience for the hour at which the gallery opened. On entering this sanctuary, my admiration exceeded all I had expected. This extensive hall, the pomp, the extreme neatness and order, the silence that prevailed, the rich carpets, the flooring more trodden by the curious crowd than worn by the assiduity of the artists, gave the idea of a fête of an unique description. The impression felt was the same as on entering a

building consecrated to the divinity. And, in fact, every object of pious respect seemed to be collected in this temple in honour of the god who presides over the arts.

The short period of my residence at Dresden was devoted to the picture gallery. The antiques were placed in the pavilions of a grand garden. I neither saw them nor the other curiosities which the town contained. I was full of the idea that too many objects in the gallery alone would still escape my observation. Thus, for instance, I rather admired the fine works of the Italian masters on the faith of others, than as being really sensible of their merit.

Before I left Dresden, I had the pleasure of being presented to the director of the gallery, Mr. Hagedorn. A young amateur whom I had met introduced me to him. Mr. Hagedorn very kindly shewed me his private collection, and seemed charmed with the enthusiasm of a young friend of the arts. Like all connoisseurs, he had a great predilection for the pictures he possessed; and people seldom appeared to him fully sensible of their merit. He was therefore delighted at my admiration of a picture by Schwanefeld, the beauties of which I contemplated and praised with warmth. This landscape reminded me of that mild pure sky beneath which I was born, of the fertile fields of my native country, and all the favours of a

temperate climate. The imitation, strongly awakening these remembrances, had powerfully affected me.

But the pleasure of these valuable observations, which were developing in my organs and mind the true sentiment of art, was painfully suspended—nay, annihilated—by the sad spectacle of the destruction and solitude which reigned in part of the capital of Saxony. A whole street in ruins: the church of the Holy Cross, with its tower rent and dilapidated, presented a scene of desolation which remained deeply impressed on my memory. From the top of the cupola of Our Lady's church, I contemplated with grief all the ruins scattered amongst the regular buildings of this beautiful city. The sexton spoke highly of the art of the able architect, who, in constructing this beautiful monument and its cupola, little thought that he was only erecting a mark for bombs. As the honest man pointed out to me the ruins which lay on every side, he said in a mournful and laconic tone, "That is the enemy's work."

On my return to Leipsic I experienced the truth of the old adage, "An increase of knowledge is an increase of trouble." The more I endeavoured to class my recent impressions, and render them useful, the less I succeeded. I was at length obliged to leave them to arrange themselves at leisure in my head, and sought di-

version in occupations more suitable to my faculties. I formed several new connexions both agreeable and useful; amongst others with the family of the rich bookseller Breiktopf; with doctor Reichel, whom I consulted from time to time with respect to my health; and with Stock the engraver, under whose direction I amused myself in his art with tolerable success. At the same time I used to visit Weisse, receiver of taxes for the circle, whose dramatic pieces were not models, but whose operas diverted us greatly; Schiebler of Hamburg, who composed in the same style; Eschenburg, who was a little older than myself, and one of the students most distinguished for capacity. Zachary was introduced by his brother, and became for some weeks one of our guests. We endeavoured to testify our sense of the honour he did us by rendering our fare a little more dainty than usual; for Zachary loved good eating, and did not conceal his taste. Lessing also came for some time. I know not what it was that we took into our heads, but we did not think fit to endeavour to see him. On the contrary, we avoided meeting him; doubtless through timidity, for we were sensible that we had no claim to any connexion with so celebrated a man. I was in the end justly punished for this shyness, which is very common amongst reserved and susceptible youths; for I never afterwards had an opportunity of seeing this man,



whom I always highly esteemed as a character of the first order.

In all our endeavours to attain a knowledge of art and antiquity, it was Winkelmann whom we had before our eyes. His genius excited universal enthusiasm in his native country. We read his writings with attention. That was the happy period of our literature, when merit was greeted by general esteem; yet the disputes of Clotz and Lessing already announced the approaching termination of this favourable season. Winkelmann, however, enjoyed unbounded respect: his reputation remained unimpaired; and it is well known how sensible he was to testimonies of public esteem. All the writings of the period spoke of him in honourable terms. The most enlightened travellers returned delighted with him, and with the information he had communicated to them: his novel views at once instructed and interested his readers. The young prince of Dessau partook of the universal enthusiasm. Born with a noble and benevolent soul, he had acquired general esteem. Every thing contributed to prepossess the world in favour of a prince whose example was at once a stimulus and a guide for persons of the same rank, and who promised his subjects a new age of gold. We heard with the liveliest joy that Winkelmann was about to return to Italy; that he was to visit the prince, his illustrious friend; and to see Oëser

on his road : we were, therefore, to partake of the happiness of his presence. We certainly did not pretend to the honour of conversing with him ; but at least we thought we should see him at our ease. At our age, every event produces a party of pleasure. We were already projecting rides and walks to Dessau, and enjoying, in anticipation, the sight of that fertile country embellished by the arts ; that country so wisely governed, and so richly adorned. We had resolved to seize every opportunity of gratifying ourselves with the sight of these men, who stood so high in our opinion. Oëser himself was wound up to the highest pitch of expectation. In the midst of our joyful exultation, the news of Winkelmann's tragical death appalled us like a sudden peal of thunder in the finest weather.\* I was in the court of Pleissenburg house, not far from the little door that led to Oëser's apartments, when I heard of this fatal event. One of my fellow-students came to meet me, and told me that Oëser was not visible ; at the same time explaining the cause of his seclusion. The effect of this horrible event was universal affliction. The premature death of our illustrious countryman made us more sensible than ever of the greatness of his genius. Possibly, if his life had been prolonged to old

\* Winkelmann was assassinated at Trieste, by a wretch named Archangeli, who had obtained his confidence by affecting an enthusiasm for the arts. F.D.

age, his genius would not have possessed so powerful an influence over the opinions of mankind as that which he obtained after Destiny, according to its usual treatment of extraordinary men, had terminated his career by a death as unexpected as terrible.

Whilst I was disconsolately lamenting the death of Winkelmann, I little thought that I should soon have cause to feel apprehensions for my own life: but my health was fast declining. I had brought with me to Leipsic a disposition to hypochondria, which a sedentary and confined life tended rather to strengthen than to remove. The pains which I had from time to time felt in my chest, ever since the overturning of our coach at Averstadt, and which had been increased by a fall from a horse, threw me into a painful state of dejection. An unfortunate dietetic system deprived me even of strength to endure my sufferings. The vapours of the heavy beer of Merseburg clogged my brain. The use of coffee, which never agreed with me, particularly when taken with milk after a meal, paralysed my digestive faculties, and seemed to stop their action entirely. All these causes combined had already caused me severe sufferings; and yet I had not had sufficient resolution to adopt a better regimen. It was at this period that the use of the cold bath was so much recommended, without any precaution. At the same time, we were to sleep on hard couches, and slightly co-

vered; a practice which stopped transpiration. It was by these follies, and others of the same kind, resulting from a false interpretation of Rousseau's precepts, that we were to be reclaimed to nature, and preserved from corruption of manners. All these maxims of the moment, indiscriminately and imprudently applied, produced only bad effects. I was thus destroying my excellent physical constitution. The obstinacy with which I pursued these systems could not fail to end in a crisis which alone could preserve me.

One night I was awakened by a violent hæmorrhage. Doctor Reichel was called, who immediately came to my assistance: I was several days between life and death. Even the joy of a sensible improvement was much damped by an abscess which formed in the left side of my neck: but a cure is always agreeable, even when it is slow and painful. Through the bounty of nature which came to my aid, I seemed to have become quite another man. I felt a serenity of mind to which I had previously been a stranger; and I was elated with joy at feeling myself internally free, although I was threatened with a long convalescence.

But what most contributed to raise my spirits was the unmerited interest taken in my fate by men of estimable character. I say unmerited, because there was not one of them whom I had

not wearied with my caprices, teased with the peevish humour of ill health, or foolishly neglected through consciousness of my bad behaviour towards them. All was forgotten; they showed the warmest affection for me. As long as I kept my apartment, and after I was able to go out, they used to come and see me, in order to divert me by their conversation. They took me to their country houses; and, owing to all these cares, I was soon restored to health. One of the persons to whom I was under the greatest obligations at this time was Mr. Langer, afterwards librarian at Wolfenbüttel. His kindness was particularly entitled to my gratitude, for he was the new Mentor of the young Count Lindenau; and I had been represented to him as a dangerous character, with whom he was forbidden to associate. I had almost become a stranger to German literature, and to every poetical attempt. I returned, with extreme pleasure, to my cherished writers of antiquity. As the voyager is pleased to distinguish in the distance the blue mountains of New Holland, the contours and masses of which he perceives without being able to ascertain their interior situation or different parts, I always had these great masters in my intellectual horizon; and to them all my vows were addressed. I made an exchange with Mr. Langer, the advantage of which was entirely on my side. I gave him a basket-full of German poets and critics; and

received in return a certain number of Greek authors, the study of which occupied me very agreeably during a long convalescence.

Confidence usually discovers itself by degrees between new friends. At first harmony is generated by the conformity of occupations and taste. The parties next confide to each other their past and present passions, and particularly their amorous adventures: but, to complete the intimacy of their connexion, it must be strengthened by sentiments more deeply inherent in us; I mean religious sentiments—interests sacred to the heart, the object of which is above the reach of time. It is thus that the basis of friendship is strengthened, whilst its summit is crowned.

The Christian religion was then fluctuating between its own constitution, founded on historical traditions as well as on positive laws, and a pure Deism, the source of which was morality, and which was in turn destined to become its foundation. The diversity of characters and opinions exhibited on this occasion an infinite number of shades. What rendered it still more striking, was the indecision that prevailed relative to the greater or less extent of influence that reason and sentiment ought respectively to possess over our belief. The most animated and daring minds might now be compared to butterflies throwing off the covering under which they have attained their perfect organization. Minds of another

stamp, more faithful and modest, might be compared to those branches of shrubs which, after having unfolded to view the loveliest flowers, still remain attached to their maternal trunk and root, and avail themselves of these family ties to bring the desired fruit to maturity. Langer belonged to the latter class: erudite as he was, and versed in the knowledge of books, the Bible still possessed, in his estimation, an incontestable superiority over all others; and remained the stem to which all moral instruction, all cultivation of the understanding, is attached. He was one of those who cannot comprehend an immediate relation between the individual and the Supreme Master of the universe. He felt a mediation necessary: and considered that something analogous to it was to be found in all the productions of heaven and earth. His agreeable and well-connected doctrine found easy access into the heart of a youth separated by an afflicting complaint from the things of this world, and wishing, above all things, to turn the activity of his mind towards heaven. His ideas met with perfectly sympathetic inclinations in my mind.

I admired the Bible as the work of the Divinity: I loved the Gospel as the book of suffering men, of tender and feeble souls. The few discussions we had with my friend arose from the circumstance that he, possessing a strong understanding, did not approve of the domination of

sensibility: whilst, for my part, I should have been much dissatisfied with myself had I not been filled with emotion and enthusiasm on reading the New Testament.

It was in the month of September 1768, in my twentieth year, that I left Leipsic. In the vicinity of Auerstadt I thought of the accident I had experienced there. But I did not foresee the much greater danger with which I was to be threatened at the same place, many years afterwards; nor could I possibly feel any presentiment, when in the great hall of the castle at Gotha, which we saw in passing through the place, that I was there destined to receive proofs of an attachment and favour which I value so highly.\*

The nearer I approached to my native city, the more seriously I began to reflect under what circumstances, with what views and hopes, I had quitted it: and it was with a painful sense of dejection that I felt myself returning like a man who has with difficulty escaped from a shipwreck. Still, as I had nothing very blameable to reproach myself with, I contrived to calm my feelings. My meeting with my parents was attended with the strongest emotions on all sides.

\* The Dukes of Saxe-Weimar and Saxe-Gotha are the most zealous protectors of literature and science in Germany. Goëthe here alludes to his long residence with the Duke of Saxe-Weimar, in the highly honourable capacity of first minister to that prince.



My illness must have altered me greatly : but no observation was made on the change ; and I was immediately persuaded to seek that mental and bodily repose I so much needed.


I found that my sister's regard for me had remained unaltered ; but she seemed to me more dissatisfied with my father than ever. He had compelled her to endure the whole weight of his teaching mania, in the most rigorous manner. Throughout the three years just elapsed, he had kept her constantly at her tasks in French, Italian, and English. Her harpsichord, and her correspondence with me, in which I had remarked my father's intervention, had always filled up the remainder of her day. She had almost been forbidden every amusement, particularly out of doors. My sister highly resented this extreme severity : and in this feeling she forgot my father's excellent qualities ; not that she had ceased to obey him, but she obeyed without affection or zeal. My mother complained to me of this in private. That instinctive want of loving and being beloved which every human being feels, and which Cornelia felt as strongly as others, had entirely devolved on me. She thought of nothing but me. Her companions, over whom she unconsciously exercised an absolute power, were obliged to join in her sentiments, and to assist her in procuring me consolations, and rendering life agreeable to me. She

was always inventing some new amusement for me ; and displayed, with this intention, a playfulness which I had never observed in her, and which rendered her extremely amiable.

My father seemed tolerably satisfied. Almost all his time was devoted to the education of my sister, or to writing the narrative of his travels. He concealed as well as he could the disappointment he felt at finding, instead of an active well-disposed youth, ready to pursue the plan of life he had traced out for him, nothing but an ailing creature, whose mind appeared still more disordered than his body. He did not, however, dissemble his impatience to see me speedily restored to health. To avoid increasing this impatience, I was obliged to use great precaution in his presence, against every symptom of my hypochondriac affections.

My mother, whose natural disposition was very gay and lively, had a very tedious time of it. The superintendence of a small household was insufficient to occupy her. Her good and sensitive soul required an object of affection ; which religion, and the friendship of several ladies of sincere and enlightened piety, had afforded her. Amongst these was Mademoiselle Von Klettenberg, a sectary of the famous Count Zinzendorf. It was from her conversations and letters that I took "The Confessions of a Noble Mind," inserted in "Wilhelm Meister."

The eminent moral and mental qualities of this lady, and the knowledge of the world and of court which she owed to her birth and education, rendered her a most agreeable acquaintance. The elegant simplicity of her dress resembled the costume of the Moravian sisters. Her serenity and calmness of mind never abandoned her. Considering the languishing state of her health as the necessary condition of her existence in this world, she endured her sufferings with angelic patience; and in the intervals between her illnesses she was lively and talkative. Her conversation turned generally, or rather wholly, on the moral advantage of the observations which we may make on ourselves, and on the religious sentiments connected with this practice. On these subjects she expressed herself with peculiar grace. She found in me a young adept, aspiring with all his might to an unknown happiness. Although I was not a very great sinner, I was not what I ought to have been; and my moral state, like my health, left much to be wished for. Mademoiselle Klettenberg thought highly of several natural or acquired faculties which she observed in me. These gifts, however, which she ascribed to me, excited neither jealousy nor timidity in her: in the first place, because she had never thought of entering into competition with any man; and secondly, because she was



fully sensible of the advantages she had over me with respect to religious sentiments. She interpreted my anxiety, impatience, efforts, researches, and doubts, as incident to a soul which is not at peace with God. But I had always persuaded myself that I had no reason to be uneasy on this point; nay, I had carried my temerity so far as to fancy that the Divinity was in my debt, if I may use the expression. This blindness arose from my absolute persuasion that my unbounded zeal might have been better rewarded by Divine grace. My directress and I had continual disputes on this point. She always concluded by treating me as a thoughtless youth who stood in need of indulgence.

The abscess in my neck caused me, at first, more inconvenience than pain. The physician and surgeon who attended me long endeavoured to disperse it. They at length resolved to cut into the quick, and used the infernal stone and other caustics, which caused me cruel tortures. These gentlemen both professed a mystic piety. The physician pretended to cure all diseases by means of a secret, consisting of a wonderful salt, which he alone knew how to compose. Finding Mademoiselle Klettenberg, as well as myself, in some degree inclined to such pursuits, he recommended us to study seriously some mystico-chemi-alchymic works, assuring us that this study would disclose to us the intimate relation

that subsisted between all the secrets of nature; and would enable us to attain, of ourselves, the knowledge of this precious salt. These promises were attractive to us. Mademoiselle Klettenberg thought there was a close connexion between a sound state of the soul, and physical health. Besides, what efficacious means she would possess of exercising her active benevolence, if she should succeed in discovering an agent capable of removing or preventing so many evils! With this intention she had already tried, but without much success, to decypher the enigmas of Welling's "*Opus Magocabalisticum*." Ascending to the original source of the works of this description, we came to the school of the new Platonics of Alexandria. We pursued this study; Mademoiselle Klettenberg, my mother, and I. We devoured the works quoted with respect by Welling; the writings of Theophrastus Paracelsus, Basilus Valentinus, Van Helmont, Starkey, and others; amongst which the "*Aurea Catena Homeri*" gave me great pleasure. We consumed much time in these fantastic researches; which occupied us during the evenings of a long winter, perhaps, more agreeably than the discovery of the mysteries we were so eagerly inquiring into would have done.

My sufferings, however, increased to such a pitch, that I thought I should speedily sink under

them. All remedies were ineffectual. In this crisis my mother implored the aid of our physician's panacea. After a long resistance, he came at last, in the middle of the night, bringing a chrystalized salt in a little phial. After dissolving it in water, I swallowed it. It had a strong alkaline taste. Scarcely had I taken it when I felt myself relieved. From that moment my disorder gradually diminished; and I recovered, although slowly. I cannot describe the confidence this happy result led us to place in our physician; or the desire it excited in us to attain to the participation of this inestimable treasure with him.

We set to work: we were perpetually busy in the midst of our matrasses, alembics, and furnaces. Our books and our worker of miracles directed our operations. We laboured incessantly to master the rebellious metal iron; the combination of which, when its resistance is overcome with the alkalis, furnishes the elements of that mystical neutral salt, celebrated by the zealous advocates of the philosopher's stone. By dint of application I at length became dexterous in preparing the *liquor silicum*.

These occupations, fantastic and incoherent as they were, procured me much useful knowledge. I initiated myself into the mysteries of crystalization, and some other natural sciences. I wished to form some idea of the recent pro-

gress of chemistry, and of the new methods ; although, as a demi-adept, I had very little respect for the manipulations of the sons of pharmacy, or of any of those who are reduced to the necessity of operating by the aid of common fire. Nevertheless, Boerhaave's Chemical Abridgment interested me strongly. I read the greater part of this great man's works, and engraved his aphorisms on my mind.

I again read my correspondence with my sister, written whilst I was at Leipsic, in which I found grounds of encouragement. I also applied once more to drawing, and began to paint all the objects that surrounded me from nature. Morgenstern, who was then celebrated, and whose fame has since been increased by his views of churches, gave me lessons in perspective. I resumed, also, the practice of engraving with no less ardour.

In reading over my correspondence with my sister, I remarked that my academical studies had no doubt excited a high notion of my progress in science and wisdom, as I played the professor in my letters, never failing to repeat to Cornelia the lessons and advice of Gellert, without considering that what may be proper for a young man is not always suitable to a female. We both laughed at this mimicry. The poems I had composed at Leipsic seemed to me, on examination, dull, cold, spiritless, and superficially facile. All

these compositions accordingly became the victims of a new *auto-da-fé*. I spared only two: "*A Lover's Caprices*," which Behrisch had so elegantly copied; and "*The Accomplices*," which still interested me much. I revised it carefully. Lessing, I thought, had in the first two acts of his *Minna* afforded a model for a good dramatic style; and I had it at heart to follow him as closely as possible.

I have dwelt too long on the particulars of my affections, occupations, and objects of emulation, during the interval between my two academical courses. I must, however, here recall the reader's attention for a moment to a point of the deepest interest to me,—the opinion which I then endeavoured to form, if possible, once for all, of the objects which are beyond the reach of our senses.

A book had fallen into my hands which had made a **strong** impression on my mind. This was **Arnold's** History of the Church and of Heresies. The author is not only an historian who leads us to reflect, but a pious and sensible man. His view of things was pretty similar to my own. What particularly pleased me in his work was his having given me a better idea of several heresiarchs, who had always been described to me as madmen or atheists. Where is the man that is exempt from the spirit of contradiction, and the love of paradox? I studied the



different opinions in matters of religion with attention. I had often heard it said that every man at last formed an opinion of his own. It therefore seemed to me perfectly natural for me to endeavour to form mine. I applied myself to this occupation with great perseverance. The new Platonism furnished the foundation of my system. My hermetic, mystical, and cabalistic researches also contributed, each in its way, to the edifice of my doctrine; and I thus constructed a rather singular universe.

I represented the Deity to myself as the Being which produces itself, from all eternity. But the idea of production involves that of multiplicity. God was therefore to manifest himself by a second mode of being, which we adore under the name of the Son. These two modes of the Divinity continuing to reproduce themselves, manifest themselves again in a third form, substantial, living, and eternal, like the whole. This is the Holy Ghost: and in this circle the Divinity is contained. His omnipotence cannot go so far as to produce another being perfectly equal to himself. Being desirous, however, to exercise his power by a new production, God gives life to a fourth being. But this being is in contradiction to himself as soon as created; for his will is unbounded, like that of the Almighty; and yet he must acknowledge himself the work of the Creator, whose supreme power, which he cannot at-

tain, he must adore. This new being produced by the Divine Omnipotence, is Lucifer. At his birth the full creative power was transferred to him; and all that was to arise in the course of time was to owe its existence to him. Eager to exercise his infinite activity, he created the angels in his image; that is to say, with an unlimited will, but obliged to acknowledge him as their author, and subordinate to his power. Surrounded with so much glory, Lucifer forgot his celestial origin, and persuaded himself that he was self-existent. From this first act of ingratitude all disorder arose; that is to say, all that appears to us contrary to the Divine views and will. The more Lucifer was satisfied with himself, the more he corrupted himself by ingratitude; and the more he corrupted, at the same time, all those intelligences whom he prevented from paying the homage of their love to their true Creator. Thus fell the angels, as we learn from the traditions of antiquity. Some attached themselves to Lucifer; others returned to the Author of all things. All that had been created, emanating directly from Lucifer, was naturally inclined to attach itself to him. The adhesion of created objects to this prince of the angels is the origin of all that appears to us under the form of matter—the source of all that we figure to ourselves as solid, heavy, and dark. All this matter proceeds from the Supreme Being only by filiation, and is not his

immediate production. It nevertheless participates in the infinity and eternity of its creators. But as all evil (since it must be named) arises from Lucifer's resolution to separate himself from God, all this creation wants the better part of itself; for it possesses nothing but what it can acquire by force of concentration, and by operating upon itself. As to the advantages produced by the force of expansion, that generous power which exhales and communicates itself, it is deprived of them. Thus continually labouring to concentrate themselves, created objects tended to their own destruction—to annihilate themselves, together with their immediate creator Lucifer. They were thus about to lose all their claims to an eternity equal to the Divine eternity. Elohim contemplated this spectacle for some time. His supreme wisdom gave him the choice of two measures. He might wait until the unfortunate result of the efforts of Lucifer and his race should leave him free scope for a new creation; or he might possess himself of the existing creation, and correct its defects by his infinite omnipotence. The Divine will determined on the latter course, and in a moment repaired all the disorder which Lucifer's enterprise had caused. It restored to the infinity of beings the faculty to extend themselves and to move towards it. The vital impulsion was re-established, and Lucifer himself could not avoid its influence. This period is that of the production of what we call

light. It is here that the commencement of what we are accustomed to designate by the word creation begins. The power of life exercised by Elohim gradually multiplied and incessantly varied its miracles. Still there wanted a being capable of renewing the primitive union with the Divinity: and man was instantly created for this purpose. He was created to be like God, and even to become his equal; and yet his nature was similar to that of Lucifer—infinite in will, limited in power. This contradiction manifested itself in all the conditions of his existence; and at the same time a perfect knowledge of himself, and a free and decisive will, were given to him to direct his conduct. It was therefore easy to foresee that he would be at once the most perfect and imperfect, the happiest and most wretched of creatures. In fact, it was not long before he acted the same part as Lucifer. To separate from one's benefactor is the true character of ingratitude; and the second species of intelligent creatures could not avoid this kind of degradation, forgetting also that every creation is but an emanation from its Author, and that it must always tend towards its celestial origin.

It thus appears that redemption, or the act which raises the fallen creature, freeing it from the bonds of vice, was determined on from all eternity; that from all eternity it was deemed necessary; that even throughout the eternal series of times to come, and of creatures to be

born, the periodical necessity of this deliverance will always arise : and what, then, can be more natural than to see the Divinity put on, for the sake of accomplishing this generous purpose, the covering of humanity which it may be said to have prepared, participate for a time in the destiny of man, and, by assimilating itself to him, to ennoble and exalt his joys, and mitigate his sorrows ? This truth, so important and necessary to the human species, has been manifested in all nations and ages under a thousand different forms. Traditions accommodated to the weakness of their reason have confirmed it even in singular fables and allegories. This is attested by the history of every religion, and the doctrines of all philosophers. Let us, then, become sensible of our real situation—the first and essential condition of our existence. Let us remember that if, on the one hand, our nature seems to hold us in abasement, and in a state of oppression, it opens to us, on the other, a way to raise ourselves, and thus to accomplish the intentions of the Divinity : let us even be assured that our nature imposes this upon us as a duty. We shall fulfil this Divine law, if, notwithstanding the ascendancy of our nature, which inclines us to selfishness, we succeed in laying aside our personality in order to raise ourselves, by regular inspirations, to noble and generous sentiments.

## CHAPTER IX.

“ It is by frequently touching our hearts by  
“ examples of the utility of the virtues, and par-  
“ ticularly of the noble and social virtues, that  
“ the tender affections are excited and developed  
“ in us. Incidents that reveal to the young  
“ reader the secrets and passions of the human  
“ heart, instil into his mind a knowledge of far  
“ greater value than Greek and Latin; a know-  
“ ledge in which Ovid was a great master.\* But  
“ that is not the only motive for putting Ovid  
“ and the other poets of antiquity into the hands  
“ of young people. We owe to the bounty of  
“ the Creator valuable faculties, to which we  
“ ought not to fail to apply the culture suitable  
“ to them; and it is not by the help of logic,  
“ metaphysics, Latin or Greek, that we shall

\* The preference here given to Ovid appears singular. The German writer quoted by Goëthe may undoubtedly find in the *Metamorphoses*, the *Art of Love*, and the *Heroids* of the Roman poet, a great display of the human passions; but it would be difficult to discover, unless it be in some of the fables of the *Metamorphoses*, those lessons on the utility of the noble and social virtues to which he alludes.—Ed.

“ attain that object. Our imagination is unable  
“ to seize and comprehend the beautiful in all its  
“ characters of truth and delicacy, at first sight,  
“ wherever it presents itself. The young must  
“ be accustomed to this exercise, by presenting  
“ to them the pictures best calculated to form  
“ their discernment and elevate their minds.  
“ There are many ideas and notions necessary  
“ for ordinary life, which are not to be found in  
“ any treatise. The most useful thing to a young  
“ pupil is to develope and at the same time  
“ purify his sentiments, inclinations, and even  
“ passions.”

These strikingly true observations are taken from the General German Library. The editors often insist upon these profound ideas. These truths, confirmed by the example of Wieland, made a deep impression on young folks of my age. It was according to these maxims that this illustrious man conducted himself at the most brilliant period of his literary career. The works he then published were so many proofs of the fidelity with which he pursued this direction. What other track could I, then, from that time forward, follow? I had laid aside philosophy and her abstract researches. I laid aside the ancient languages, the deep study of which is so laborious. The certainty of the methods used in the sciences appeared to me more and more suspicious. Every thing, therefore, tended to

bring back my attention to internal life, to the motions of the soul, and to the passions whose influence I experienced or anticipated. This knowledge seemed to me the most essential object, and the most worthy of my meditations. In this I saw the most certain means of developing my intellectual faculties; nor could any study be more suitable to my feelings, and my inclination for a completely poetical life. The failure of so many excellent projects, the evaporation of such great hopes, made me readily consent to my father's scheme of sending me to Strasburg. I promised myself an agreeable life there, whilst continuing my studies, and endeavouring to qualify myself to take my degrees in jurisprudence.

In the spring, my health was re-established. I felt the ardour peculiar to youth revived within me. I therefore left the paternal roof a second time, with far other intentions than those with which I first departed from it. That pretty apartment, in which I had suffered so much, was now thought on with pain. The thoughts of my daily communications with my father were equally disagreeable. I was grieved to think that during my relapse and long convalescence he had shewn an excessive impatience; that, instead of treating me with consolatory indulgence, he had behaved harshly towards me, as if it had been in my power to avoid illness. It



is true that I had several times offended him; I had ventured to find fault with the plan according to which he had regulated the distribution and interior arrangement of our house. In short, my departure for Strasburg was accelerated by a dispute between us, to which my indiscreet remarks gave rise.

Scarcely had I reached Strasburg when I ran to see the magnificent steeple. I soon ascended its platform; whence, the day being fine, I had a clear view of that magnificent country which I was to inhabit for so long a period; that great and beautiful city, and those meadows which surround it, studded with large and umbrageous trees. To the very horizon I observed with admiration the rich vegetation that embellishes the banks and isles of the Rhine; the sloping plain on the south side, watered by the Iller; the backgrounds, formed by mountains which charm the eye by an agreeable mixture of wood and cultivated lands; the northern hills, intersected by a multitude of little rivulets, so favourable on every side to rapid vegetation. I was delighted to see the excellent cultivation of this most productive country, every where verdant, every where promising abundant harvests; the villages and farms that adorn its best situations;—in short, that immense and beautiful plain, prepared like a new paradise for man, strewed with pleasant habitations, and bounded on all sides by richly wooded

mountains. In the height of my enthusiasm I blessed Providence for having called me, for a time, to the enjoyment of so charming a residence.

The first aspect of a country one is destined to remain in is a blank to the imagination, in which nothing announces distinctly either pleasure or pain. Those smiling, variegated, animated plains are still mute. The eye observes only the objects themselves, none of which inspire either inclination or repugnance. Still a presentiment of the future agitates the young spectator; and he imagines he perceives, in the nature of the country he is contemplating, something closely connected with the events which are there to sweeten or embitter his existence.

I took some small but well situated and agreeable apartments near the Fish-market; a long and handsome street, the perpetual bustle of which proved a recreation to me in my idle moments. I delivered my letters of recommendation. I agreed to take my meals at a boarding-house, where I met with pleasant society. At Strasbourg they do not proceed as in the German universities, where people endeavour to attain profound erudition in every part of the science of laws. Here, according to the French system, they especially attended to the practice. They endeavoured to seize a few general principles and preliminary notions as speedily as possible,

and passed on to the knowledge of matters of ordinary use. A private master in great repute was recommended to me, and soon acquired my confidence. I had learnt nothing thoroughly during my residence at Leipsic. But with respect to the science of laws, I possessed those general notions which are so easily obtained under the instruction of able professors, and in the conversation of well-informed young men. The display of these superficial attainments did not, however, deceive my tutor. He gave me to understand that the essential object was to fulfil the end for which I came; that is to say, to put myself in a condition to pass an examination, that I might take my degrees and proceed to practice. There was, therefore, no occasion to examine into the origin of laws, nor to estimate their merits; studies in which learned men consumed their whole lives. The matter was to gain a thorough knowledge of the existing laws, in order to make use of them for the advantage and defence of our clients: our talents and activity would in time do the rest. He therefore gave me a book, which I carefully studied. Accordingly I found myself, a short time afterwards, in some measure against my inclination, amongst the candidates for examination.

But the species of activity natural to my character was far from being satisfied with this kind of study. I had no taste for any thing positive.

What I could not learn according to the principles of reason, I wished, at least, to elucidate by history. A more extensive scope for my faculties was soon afforded me, in which I made some progress, in a singular manner, promoted by the interest with which I entered into it, and which was excited by an unforeseen circumstance.

Most of my table companions were students in medicine. They are the only students, as is well known, who are eagerly occupied with their science, even after the hours of study. This zeal arises from the very nature of their labours, which, at once simple and complicated, are objects of sense, and nevertheless are of the most elevated nature. The object of medicine being the whole man, occupies man entirely. The student learns to apply his science in difficult circumstances, and often in perilous situations. But his skill, in more than one sense, carries its reward with it. The interest which he takes in his studies, and the prospect of independence and comfort which they afford him, induce him to devote himself to them with ardour.

As it happened before, when I boarded with counsellor Ludwig, I heard of nothing but medicine at my *table d'hôte*. When we were taking a walk, or engaged in a party of pleasure, it was still almost the only subject of our conversation ;

for my table companions, like good comrades, were almost always with me wherever I went. Other students joined them from time to time. The faculty of medicine at Strasburg was no less celebrated for the brilliant reputation of its professors, than for the affluence of its pupils. I had sufficient preliminary notions to allow my zeal to be warmed by the pleasure of more extensive instruction. I therefore attended Spielmann's course of chemistry, and Lobstein's of anatomy. The degree of consideration and confidence which I had acquired in our society by my superficial attainments, likewise tended to encourage me.

Nor was this parcelling out of my studies sufficient. They were soon suspended by a remarkable event, which set the whole town in motion, and procured us several days' holidays. Marie-Antoinette, Archduchess of Austria, afterwards Queen of France, was expected at Strasburg, through which town she was to pass on her way to Paris. The solemnities which fix the attention of the populace on the grandeurs of this world were hastily prepared. I took particular notice of the edifice constructed in an isle in the Rhine, between the two bridges, for the reception of that princess; and the delivery of her person into the hands of the ambassador of the King, her husband's grandfather. This edifice was not very high. In the middle

was a large room, adjoining on each side to a smaller one; and both led to several lesser chambers. Had this building been more durable, it might have served for a place of recreation to eminent persons. But what most interested me, and cost me some money, which I did not spare in order to obtain the porter's leave to return, was the tapestries from the Gobelins, with which the inside of the apartment was decorated. I then, for the first time, saw those famous tapestries executed after the cartoons of Raphaël. Although they were only copies, they gave me an idea of the regularity and perfection of the originals. I afterwards viewed these fine works several times, and still thought I had not seen enough of them. But the decoration of the grand hall displeased me, as much as these tapestries delighted me. It was adorned with much larger, more brilliant, and richer tapestries than the other, executed after pictures by the French artists of that period.

I should in all probability have seen something to admire in the style of these artists; for neither my judgment nor my imagination were inclined to exclusive prejudices. But the subject of these paintings shocked me. It was no other than the history of Jason, Medea, and Creusa; that is to say, the picture of the most disastrous of all marriages. To the left of the throne was seen the unfortunate bride,

expiring in the agonies of the most cruel death. To the right was the distracted Jason, deploring the death of his children, who lay dead at his feet; whilst the Fury who had destroyed them fled through the air in her car drawn by dragons.

All the maxims of taste which I had imbibed from Oëser were fermenting in my head. The placing of Christ and his apostles in one of the apartments of an edifice devoted to a nuptial ceremony, was a breach of propriety in my estimation. There could be no doubt but that this singular choice had been dictated solely by the size of the room. I excused this, however, in consideration of the pleasure I had received from the tapestries. But the enormous blunder committed in the principal room quite astonished me. I loudly called on my companions to witness this flagrant attack on good sense and taste. "What!" I exclaimed, regardless of the bystanders, "will they actually set before the eyes of the young Queen, at the very first step she makes in her new dominions, the representation of the most horrible of marriages! Is there nobody amongst the French architects and decorators able to understand that a picture is a representation; that it acts on the senses and the mind; that it must produce an impression; that it excites presentiments? Had they nothing more appropriate than these

“frightful spectres to exhibit to their beautiful  
“and amiable Queen on her first arrival?” I know  
not how much more I said; but my friends  
were anxious to prevail on me to be silent, and  
to hurry me away, for fear of some unpleasant  
occurrence. They assured me that people did  
not lose their time in looking for the meaning of  
pictures; and that nobody in the whole popula-  
tion of Strasburg and its vicinity, nor even the  
Queen herself, or her court, would think of any  
such matter.

I still well remember the beautiful and noble  
countenance, the gay yet majestic air, of this  
young princess. We saw her very plainly  
through the glasses of her coach. She seemed  
to be conversing in a very affable manner with  
the ladies who accompanied her, and to be much  
amused with the sight of the crowd which  
thronged around her.

The Queen pursued her way. The crowd dis-  
persed, and the town resumed its usual tran-  
quillity. Before the princess arrived, a procla-  
mation had been published, forbidding every  
person afflicted with any disgusting disorder to  
appear on her way. This excited several jests.  
I composed some French verses, in which I drew  
a comparison between the coming of Christ, who  
seemed to attend particularly to the sick and in-  
firm, and that of the Queen, who appeared to  
dread the sight of these unfortunate people.



This poetical trifle was pretty well received amongst my friends. But a Frenchman who lived with us criticised its diction and prosody without mercy; although not without reason, as it appeared. I believe I never afterwards composed any thing in French verse.

Scarcely had the echo of the news of the Queen's arrival in the capital ceased to resound, when we were thunderstruck by the report of the dreadful event which had attended her marriage fêtes. Owing to the neglect of the police, a multitude of men, horses, and carriages had been precipitated amongst heaps of building materials which encumbered the public road; and these royal nuptials had plunged the whole city in mourning and affliction. Every endeavour was used to conceal the real extent of this disaster from the world and from the royal couple. Numbers of individuals who had perished were secretly interred. Many families were only convinced of their share in this fatal event by the indefinitely prolonged absence of their relations. Need I say that this disaster forcibly reminded me of the terrific images which had been presented to the Queen in her grand drawing-room at Strasburg.

An ill-timed jest that I had indulged in had nearly caused my parents the most serious alarm. I had addressed a letter dated from Versailles to one of my young friends at Frankfort, giving him

an account of the solemnities of the time. He believed that I was at Paris at the fatal period, and dreaded to hear that I had been involved in the terrible catastrophe. Fortunately my parents received a letter from me before they heard of the sad conjectures which he imparted to some of our mutual friends. I swore to renounce mystification for ever. But I have not kept my word very strictly. Real life would often be almost intolerable, but for the help of a little fiction and pleasantry.

The Strasburghers are passionately addicted to taking walks; and it is no wonder they are so. To whatever side you direct your steps, you meet with charming spots embellished by nature or by art, to which you see a gay and pleasure-loving people flocking. It is here, above all other places, that the variety of costumes worn by the women attracts the gaze of the crowd. The young girls of the middle class wore, at this period, their hair turned up in tresses, and fixed with a great pin, with the close dress which so agreeably clings to the form. This dress was even worn by many women without distinction of class or condition; and many rich and respectable families would not allow their daughters to wear any other. The rest of the Strasburg women had adopted the French fashions; and the number of these new proselytes daily increased. My friends and I

had introduced ourselves to several of the inhabitants, who received us extremely well at their gardens and country-houses. There we used to amuse ourselves in walking, conversing, and playing. I now learned to play at cards, of which diversion I perceived the utility. It is a preservative against *ennui*, calumny, and ill-natured observations, the too frequent attendants on conversations; which, when too far prolonged, are apt to degenerate into disputes or nonsense. Our table society was increased. Amongst the new guests I had particularly noticed Jung, afterwards known under the name of Stilling, and Lerse. The first possessed much good sense and industry. The basis of his energy was a firm faith in God, his providence, its continual superintendence over his creatures, and the aid that may be expected from it in all dangers: in his agitated and restless life he had so often experienced the Divine protection, that he ~~was~~ inaccessible to fear or anxiety. Lerse belonged to that class of faithful Christians, whose religion rests chiefly on reason, and on the masculine independence of a firm and upright character; and who consider sentiment too apt to mislead. Order and exactness were the distinguishing features of his moral physiognomy. He never forgot to mark his napkin, nor to scold the servant if the chairs were not well cleaned. A slight tinge of irony mingled in all his discourse.

He was at once our master of the ceremonies, our master at arms, and the sovereign arbitrator of our quarrels; which he always contrived to pacify, even when they had gone so far as a meeting. I had this young man, thus skilled to combine an amiable deportment with gravity, in my mind, when I composed *Goetz Von Berlichingen*. Anxious to consecrate our friendship by a public testimony of my esteem, I gave the name of Francis Lerse to the personage in my piece who is so remarkable for uniting personal dignity with subordination.

Whilst this Mentor with his ironical phlegm taught us the essential art of preserving this dignity without wounding that of others, and of remaining, as far as possible, in peace with the world, by maintaining a becoming attitude in it, I had to contend with difficulties of another species. My health was tolerably good; but a nervous irritability rendered me unable to endure the noise and sight of infirmities and sufferings. I could not stand on an elevation and look downwards without feeling a vertigo. I accustomed myself to noise by taking my station, at night, near the trumpets that sounded the retreat, at the risk of having my tympanum cracked by their loud braying. To cure myself of giddiness, I often ascended to the top of the Minster tower alone. I used to remain a quarter of an hour sitting on the stairs before I durst

venture out. I then advanced on a small platform, scarcely an ell square, without any rail or support. Before me was an immense extent of country, whilst the objects nearest to the Minster concealed from my sight the church and the monument on which I was perched. I was precisely in the situation of a man launched into mid air in a balloon. I repeated the experiment of this painful situation, until at length it gave me no sensation at all. Of the utility of these trials I was afterwards fully sensible, when the study of geology led me to traverse mountains. When I had to visit great buildings, I could stand with the workmen upon the scaffolds or the roofs. These habits were no less useful to me at Rome, when I wished to examine the celebrated monuments of that city closely. In studying anatomy, I learned to endure the sight of those objects which at first shocked me most. I attended a course of clinical lectures and a course on midwifery, with the twofold intention of gaining an increase of knowledge, and of freeing myself from all pusillanimous repugnance. On the whole, I succeeded in fortifying myself against all those impressions of the senses and imagination which disturb the tranquillity of the soul. Dark and lonely places no longer caused me any emotion. Whilst I was going through these physical trials, my mind was not unoccupied.

Every one knows that there is no readier way to get rid of the consciousness of our own faults, than to busy ourselves about those of other people. This is a method much in vogue in the best company. But nothing gives us so strong a sense of our independence, or makes us so important in our own eyes, as the censure of our superiors and of the great of this world.

Whoever remembers the situation in which France stood at the period of which I am treating, may easily conceive the manner in which the King, his ministers, his court, and favourites, were spoken of in Alsace, a province that was but half French. All the anecdotes I heard related, exclusive of the falsehoods that were mingled with them, afforded me information and pleasure; and I preserved notes of them, which are not uninteresting. Another object of our pleasures was the plan formed by the intendant Gayot for the embellishment of the city, and the regulation and enlargement of its crooked and unequal streets. The architect Blondel had drawn up a fine plan, which was favoured by those who were likely to gain by the proposed changes; and, of course, opposed by those who expected to be losers. This struggle incessantly impeded the execution of the plan. In one place they began to pull down; in another they would neither repair nor rebuild a condemned house; at a third spot the demolitions

were opposed. The public authorities durst not resort to compulsion. Thus the city was in a kind of chaos, and was losing its old form without receiving a new one.

Another event which occupied the attention of the Protestants of Strasburg was the expulsion of the Jesuits. These good fathers had suddenly appeared in the city at the moment of its annexation to France, and had lost no time in securing themselves an establishment there. They soon contrived to aggrandize themselves. They had had a magnificent college erected, so close to the Minster that the back of the church was concealed by one of the sides of their building. This edifice was intended to have four faces, with a garden in the middle; but only three of them had been erected. It was a stone building, and solid, like all the erections built by these fathers. To press hard upon the Protestants, if it could not stifle them, was the plan of the society, which was ambitious to restore the old religion in all its primitive splendour. The fall of the Jesuits excited the most lively joy in their adversaries, who congratulated each other on seeing their wines exposed to sale, their library dispersed, and their college devoted to another religious order, which, it was thought, would certainly be less enterprising.

In every town there must always be a tragical

event to occupy people's minds, and produce a strong emotion. The city of Strasburg found such an event in the catastrophe of its unfortunate pretor Klingling. This man had reached the highest degree of earthly felicity. His power over the city and country was almost unlimited. He enjoyed all the advantages that fortune, rank, and great influence can bestow. But in losing the favour of the court he lost every thing. He was accused as a criminal for all that he had previously done by the consent of authority. He was imprisoned; and terminated his days in confinement by an equivocal death, at more than seventy years of age.

Our table was frequented by a chevalier of Saint Louis, who was always ready to relate anecdotes of this kind. His narrations were lively and spirited. The interest I took in them sometimes induced me to accompany him in his walks: the rest of the company avoided him, and allowed me to go with him alone. I often neglected for a long time, to consider the character of my new acquaintances, or the effect they produced on me. Nevertheless I perceived, by degrees, that the stories of my companion served rather to disquiet and perplex than to instruct me. I knew not to what cause to ascribe these impressions, although the enigma was not very difficult of solution. This man belonged to the very numerous class of those who live to no pur-



pose. He had a decided taste, an absolute passion for reverie; but no talents for reflection. Men of this character readily attach themselves to one idea, which is truly a moral malady. This was his case, and carried to a most troublesome extreme. His whim was to be perpetually complaining of his want of memory, particularly with respect to the most recent events; and to maintain that all virtue was the effect of a good memory, and all vice of a bad one. This thesis he defended with much ingenuity; which is a very easy matter when people deviate from the fixed sense of words, and pervert them from their natural signification, to accommodate them to the object in view.

In one of our walks we met with an old beggar-woman, whose importunities made my companion lose the thread of one of his stories: “Hold your tongue, you old witch, and leave us,” said he.—“Old!” replied she: “if you did not mean to grow old yourself, you should have got hanged whilst you were young.”—“Hanged!” cried he, turning back sharply; “hanged! I was too honest for that. But I ought to have hanged myself, or blown my brains out. I should not, in that case, have been living now to be good for nothing.” The old woman stood motionless. He continued, “You have told a great truth, you mother of witches; and as you have hitherto

“escaped strangling and burning, I must pay you “for it.” With these words he gave her a piece of money that is seldom given to mendicants.

We had reached the first bridge across the Rhine, and I was endeavouring to renew the conversation, when we suddenly saw a very pretty girl advancing towards us, who stopped on meeting us, and curtsied politely. “What! “captain,” cried she, “don’t you recollect me?” “Indeed, mademoiselle—,” replied the chevalier, somewhat embarrassed.—“How!” said the young lady, in a tone which expressed both good-will and surprise, “do you so soon forget “your friends?” This word ‘forget’ irritated him. He shook his head, and replied rather drily:—“Really, mademoiselle, I did not think “myself one of yours.”—“Look to it, captain,” replied she, with some acrimony, but at the same time in a very deliberate manner: “another time I may very possibly not know you.” She then rapidly passed by us. My companion, striking his head with his fist, began to curse his want of memory. He never failed, he said, to salute a woman who was neither young nor pretty, because he remembered her a lovely woman thirty years ago; and now he was offending a pretty young girl, who had probably appeared to him equally amiable a few days before. “Yes,” he resumed: “ingratitude is the greatest of vices;

“ and no one would be ungrateful, if his memory  
“ were always good.”

On returning to our inn we met with a young man, whom the chevalier saluted and called by his name. He had already mentioned him to me in highly favourable terms; and had told me that this young man, who was employed in the war-office, had assisted him in the most disinterested manner to obtain his pension. Conversation commenced\* on general matters, and we peaceably emptied a flaggon of wine, when a new fancy of our chevalier's gave us another specimen of his eccentricity. Casting his eyes around, he perceived on the table a double portion of coffee and two cups. He thence concluded that the young man had not been alone before we came in; and at length contrived to persuade himself that the pretty girl we had met, had been in his company. His original vexation being now increased by a most unaccountable fit of jealousy, he was completely beside himself.

He began by rallying the young man, who, like a well-bred youth, endeavoured to defend himself with good-humour and spirit. But our chevalier continuing his attacks, and proceeding beyond the bounds of civility, the other had no alternative but to withdraw; which he did, intimating clearly the kind of satisfaction he thought himself entitled to demand. The captain's fury then burst forth, its energy being increased by

the operation of a flaggon of wine, which he had himself emptied during this scene. He breathed nothing but blood and vengeance. But presently the disposition of his mind changed on a sudden, without any diminution of its violence. I represented to him his ingratitude to the young clerk, whose conduct towards him he had praised so highly to me. Never did I see a man so furiously enraged against himself as this cavalier now appeared. The expression of his excessive remorse was quite caricatured. But as passion always awakens genius, the explosion of his was truly original. He recapitulated all the events of the evening, and with great eloquence converted them into so many accusations against himself, and at length grew so violent that I was fearful he would go and throw himself into the Rhine. Had I been certain of fishing him up again as quickly as Mentor caught Telemachus, I would have allowed him to make the perilous leap, and I should have carried him home sufficiently cooled, at least, for this time.

I confided the affair to Lerse. The following morning we went together to find out the young clerk. We arranged a sort of meeting in which every thing was to be amicably settled. The most amusing part of the affair was that the captain, in his sleep, had totally forgotten his rudeness. We found him, however, very ready to make an apology to the young man; and the lat-

ter having no inclination to push the matter farther, all was made up in the course of the morning. The affair, however, had not remained perfectly unknown; and the jests of my friends on the occasion made me sensible of the great possibility there was that the captain's acquaintance might prove troublesome to me.

I often amused myself with a visit to the Minster; and becoming more and more sensible of the combination of two qualities in this edifice which seemed incompatible with each other,—that is to say, the grand and the agreeable,—I began to study the building. The result of my researches was the conviction that our country was entitled to claim the beauties of this astonishing building; and that what is improperly called Gothic architecture was an art which originated in Germany. I composed a short dissertation to establish the claims of our country to this honour, and Herder inserted it in his work on the productions of art in Germany. \*

Whilst I thus employed myself in various studies and researches, I did not neglect the pleasures incident to youth. At Strasburg every day and hour offers to sight the magnificent monument of the Minster, and to the ear the music and movements of the dance. My father himself had given my sister and me our first lessons in this art. We had learnt the grave minuet from him. The solos and pas-de-deux of the French theatre,

whilst it was with us at Frankfort, had given me a greater relish for the pleasures of dancing. But from the unfortunate termination of my love affair with Margaret, I had entirely neglected it. This taste revived in me at Strasburg. On Sundays and holidays joyous troops, met for the purpose of dancing, were to be seen in all directions. There were little balls in all the country-houses, and nothing was talked of but the brilliant routs expected in the winter. I was therefore apprehensive of finding myself out of my element in company, unless I qualified myself to figure as a dancer; and I accordingly took lessons of a master recommended by one of my friends. He was a true French character, cold and polished. He taught with care, but without pedantry. As I had already had some practice, he was not dissatisfied with me.

He had two daughters who were both pretty, and the elder of whom was not twenty. They were both good dancers. This circumstance greatly facilitated my progress, for the awkwardest scholar in the world must soon have become a passable dancer with such agreeable partners. They were both extremely amiable; they spoke only French. I endeavoured to appear neither awkward nor ridiculous to them, and I had the good fortune to please them. Their father did not seem to have many scholars, and they lived very much alone. They several times

asked me to stay and converse after my lesson, which I very readily did. I was much pleased with the younger one: the manners of both were very becoming: the elder, who was at least as handsome as her sister, did not please me so much, although she took more pains to do so. At the hour of my lesson she was always ready to be my partner, and she frequently prolonged the dance. The younger, although she behaved in a friendly manner towards me, kept a greater distance, and her father had to call her to take her sister's place.

One evening after the dance, I was going to lead the elder to their apartment, but she detained me. "Let us stay here awhile," said she: "my sister, I must own to you, is at this moment engaged with a fortune-teller, who is giving her some intelligence from the cards respecting an absent lover, a youth extremely attached to Emily, and in whom all her hopes are placed. My heart," continued she, "is free: I suppose I shall often see the gift of it despised." On this subject I paid her some compliments. "You may," said I, "consult the oracle, and then you will know what to expect. I have a mind to consult it likewise: I shall be glad to ascertain the merit of an art in which I have never had much confidence." As soon as she assured me the operation was ended, I led her into the room. We found her sister

in good humour; she behaved to me in a more friendly manner than usual. Sure, as she seemed to be of her absent lover, she thought there was no harm in showing some attentions to her sister's, for in that light she regarded me.

I engaged the fortune-teller, by the promise of a handsome recompense, to tell the elder of the young ladies and me our fortunes also. After all the usual preparations and ceremonies, she shuffled the cards for this beautiful girl; but having carefully examined them, she stopped short and refused to explain herself. "I see  
"plainly," said the younger of the girls, who was already partially initiated into the mysteries of this kind of magic, "there is something unpleasant which you hesitate to tell my sister." The other sister turned pale, but recovering herself, entreated the sibyl to tell her all she had seen in the cards without reserve. The latter, after a deep sigh, told her that she loved, but was not beloved in return; that a third person stood between her and her beloved; with several other tales of the same kind. The embarrassment of the poor girl was visible. "Let us see  
"whether a second trial will be more fortunate," said the old woman, again shuffling and cutting the cards; but it was still worse this time. She wished to make a third trial, in the hopes of better success; but the inquisitive fair one could bear it no longer, and burst into a flood of



tears. Her beautiful bosom was violently agitated, she turned her back on us, and ran into the next room. I knew not what to do; inclination retained me with her sister; compassion urged me to follow the afflicted one. "Console Lucinda," said the former, "go to her."—"How can I console her," said I, "without showing her the least signs of attachment? I should be cold and reserved. Is this the moment to be so? Come with me yourself."—"I know not," replied Emily, "whether my presence would be agreeable to her." We were, however, going in to speak to her, but we found the door bolted. In vain we knocked, called, and entreated Lucinda; no answer. "Let us leave her to recover herself," said Emily, "she will see no one." What could I do? I paid the fortune-teller liberally for the harm she had done us, and withdrew.

I durst not return to the two sisters the next day. On the third day Emily sent to desire me to come to them without fail. I went accordingly. Towards the end of the lesson Emily appeared; she danced a minuet with me; she had never displayed so much grace, and the father declared he had never seen a handsomer couple dancing in his room. After the lesson, the father went out and inquired for Lucinda. "She is in bed," said Emily; "but do not be uneasy; when she thinks herself ill, she suffers the less from her afflictions; and whatever she may

“ say, she has no inclination to die : it is only  
“ her passion that torments her. Last night she  
“ declared to me that she was certain she should  
“ sink under her grief this time, and desired that  
“ when she should be near her end, the ungrate-  
“ ful man who had only gained her heart for the  
“ purpose of treating her so ill, should be brought  
“ to her.”—“ I cannot reproach myself with hav-  
“ ing given her any reason to imagine me in  
“ love with her,” I exclaimed ; “ I know one who  
“ can very well testify in my favour on this occa-  
“ sion.”—“ I understand you,” answered Emily,  
laughing ; “ it is necessary to come to a reso-  
“ lution, to spare us all much vexation. Will  
“ you take it ill if I entreat you to give over your  
“ lessons ? My father says you have now no  
“ further occasion for them ; and that you know  
“ as much as a young man has occasion to know  
“ for his amusement.”—“ And is it you, Emily,  
“ who bid me banish myself from your presence ?”  
“ Yes, but not merely of my own accord. Lis-  
“ ten to me : after you left us the day before yes-  
“ terday, I made the fortune-teller cut the cards  
“ for you ; the same fortune appeared thrice, and  
“ more clearly each time. You were surrounded  
“ by friends, by great lords ; in short, by all  
“ kinds of happiness and pleasure ; you did not  
“ want for money ; women were at a certain  
“ distance from you ; my poor sister, in particu-  
“ lar, remained afar off ; another was nearer to

“ you, and I will not conceal from you that I  
“ think it was myself. After this confession, you  
“ ought not to take my advice amiss. I have pro-  
“ mised my heart and hand to an absent friend,  
“ whom I have hitherto loved above all the world.  
“ What a situation would be yours, between two  
“ sisters, one of whom would torment you with  
“ her passion and the other by her reserve ; and  
“ all this for nothing—for a momentary attach-  
“ ment ; for even had we not known who you are,  
“ and the hopes you have, the cards would have  
“ informed us. Farewell,” added she, leading me  
towards the door ; “ and since it is the last time  
“ we shall see each other, accept a mark of  
“ friendship which I could not otherwise have  
“ given you.” At these words she threw her  
arms round my neck and gave me a kiss in  
the most tender manner.

At the same instant a concealed door opened,  
and her sister, in a pretty morning undress,  
rushed towards us, and exclaimed, “ You shall  
“ not be the only one to take leave of him.”—  
Emily let me go, Lucinda embraced me,  
and held me closely to her bosom. Her beau-  
tiful black hair caressed my face. She remained  
some time in this situation ; and thus I found  
myself between the two sisters in the distress-  
ing predicament that Emily had warned me of.  
At length Lucinda, quitting her hold of me,  
fixed her eyes on me with a serious air ; then

walked up and down the room with hurried steps, and at last threw herself upon a sofa. Emily approached her, but Lucinda pushed her back. Then commenced a scene which I still recollect with pain. It was not a theatrical scene ; there was but too much truth in the passion of this young and lively Frenchwoman.

Lucinda overwhelmed her sister with reproaches. "This," said she, "is not the first heart favourably disposed towards me, that you have deprived me of. It was the same with that absent friend whom you drew into your snares, even before my eyes ! You have now robbed me of this one, without relinquishing the other. How many more will you take from me ? I am frank and artless : people think they know me well, and therefore they neglect me. You are calm and dissembling : they think to find something wonderful in you ; but your outward form covers a cold selfish heart, which only seeks victims."

Emily had seated herself near her sister ; she remained silent. Lucinda, growing warmer, entered into particulars to which it did not become me to listen. Emily endeavoured to pacify her, and made me a sign to retire. But jealousy has the eyes of Argus : and this sign did not escape Lucinda's notice. She arose, came towards me, looked me in the face with a pensive air, and said : " I know you are lost

“ to me. I renounce all pretensions to you :  
“ but as to you, sister, he shall no more be  
“ yours than mine.” Saying this she embraced  
me again, pressed my face to hers, and repeatedly joined her lips to mine. “ And now,” she cried, “ dread my malediction. Woe on woe, “ eternal woe, to her who shall first press those “ lips after me. Embrace him now, if you dare. “ I am sure that heaven has heard me. And “ you, Sir, retire without delay.”

I did not wait for a repetition of the command ; and I left them with a firm resolution never more to set foot in a house where I had innocently done so much mischief !

## CHAPTER X.

THE situation of the German poets in the world was then in the highest degree insignificant. Unless they had some private patronage, there was neither emolument nor respectability for them. A poor poet, justly conscious of his genius, was condemned to creep with difficulty through the narrow path of life. Under the pressure of want, he was obliged to exhaust the precious gifts of the muses on profitless labours. Occasional poems, the most ancient and free of all the poetical arts, were so much decried, that even to this day people have no idea of the real interest of these compositions. Poets were thus miserably pressed down to the lowest round of the social ladder, like buffoons and parasites. They afforded a caricature which people ridiculed at their pleasure, both on the stage and in the world.

If, on the contrary, poetical talent devolved on a man of respectability, his situation in life shed a splendour around him which reflected on his muse. Noblemen, who knew the world like Hagedorn, rich citizens like Brockes, and

celebrated philosophers like Haller, already shone amongst the most esteemed characters of their country. Those men were held in extraordinary respect, who united this pleasing talent with capacity and probity in business. It was this uncommon alliance of heterogeneous qualities that was admired and respected in Utz, Rabener, and Weisse.

At length the period arrived when poetical genius felt its strength, and succeeded in obtaining the consideration due to it, and in securing its native dignity and independence. Every requisite for this glorious liberation of poetry was found combined in Klopstock. His youth was remarkable for the purity of his sentiments and morals; a serious education and solid principles obtained him great personal respect at an early period of life. Laying down the plan of his career with deliberation, he selected for his muse the most sublime of subjects, and the best calculated to affect the heart. It was reserved for his genius to invoke with new enthusiasm universal veneration to the name of the Messiah. The Redeemer was the hero he chose to conduct through earthly miseries and sufferings to triumph in the highest heaven. All that there was of human and divine, all of Milton's inspiration, in the soul of the youthful poet, was devoted to the embellishment of this magnificent subject. Nourished

by the Bible, filled with the marrow of the sacred books, he had made himself the contemporary and friend of the patriarchs, the prophets, and the precursors of the Divinity. In reading the first ten cantos of the Messiah, we share in that heavenly peace which Klopstock enjoyed whilst he was meditating and composing his poem.

The poet felt himself elevated by the dignity of his subject. He justly considered himself as in some degree sanctified by the sublimity of his contemplations. He became more than ever scrupulous to maintain an unspotted purity. At an advanced age he was much concerned at the thought of having devoted his first love to a young female, who, by marrying another person, had left him doubtful of the sincerity of her attachment, and the claims she had to his affection. The sentiments that attached him to his Meta, that tranquil and altogether spiritual love; their short and holy union; the aversion of the surviving husband to a second marriage;\* in short, all his engagements and affections were of such a nature as to allow him to preserve the memory of them in the abodes of the blessed.

The respect which he acquired by an honourable life was still increased by the reception he

\* The manner in which Goëthe here expresses himself, might lead one to imagine that Klopstock, after the loss of his first wife, passed the remainder of his days in widowhood. The fact is, however, that he contracted a second marriage. ED.



met with in Denmark, and the kindness which he so long experienced in the house of a great minister. His residence in the midst of a circle of eminent personages, where he was the object of public attention, served to confirm him in the plans he had adopted. An air of reserve, a measured kind of language, a laconic mode of expression, which he never laid aside, even in the most free and open communications, gave him throughout life a diplomatic and ministerial aspect, which seemed to form a contrast with his natural gentleness and sensibility; although these different manners originated in the same source. Accordingly, his first works, at once the results and models of a perfect purity, obtained an incalculable influence. But, although his example was unquestionably of great service to his contemporaries, it would be difficult to point out any passages of his life that would justify our including him in the number of those great men, whose generosity has extended a protecting hand to unfortunate talent.

This eagerness to be serviceable to young men drawn by inclination into the literary career, to render life pleasant to them, to sustain their hopes, to promote their success, to smooth the path of such of them as fortune had frowned upon, is an honour that is particularly due to one of our poets who stands in the second class with respect to his personal dignity, but in the

first in regard to his active influence ;—I mean to speak of Gleim. He held a situation, which, although obscure, was lucrative. He lived at Halberstadt, a well situated town of the middling order, but animated by military activity, by industry, and by literature. A great and wealthy establishment drew revenues out of it, of which part were, however, usefully employed on the spot. Gleim was passionately fond of writing, but this predilection did not suffice for the employment of all his faculties. Perhaps it was a still more powerful inclination that constantly induced him to promote the industry of others. To these two inclinations, which strengthened each other, the whole of his life was devoted. To be composing and giving was as necessary to him as the air he breathed. His greatest pleasure was to relieve the distresses of necessitous genius. He thus did honour to literature, whilst he raised up numerous friends and dependents for himself. These applauded his poems, which were somewhat diffuse in style; it was the only way they had to testify their gratitude for his favours.

The high opinion of themselves which these two men had ventured to conceive, emboldened their competitors also to think themselves somebody; and produced both on the public and on individuals, an effect favourable to poetry. But this consciousness of their personal importance,

honourable as it was to their feelings, was, nevertheless, attended with a serious inconvenience to themselves, to those who surrounded them, and to their contemporaries. Great as they were in mental faculties, to the world they were little; and as they could not be always composing and giving, and were total strangers to the occupations which absorb the time of eminent personages, of the rich and great of the world, they concentrated themselves entirely in their own little circles. They attached to all their inclinations, actions, and even pastimes, a degree of interest which they could avow only amongst themselves. They received merited praises and testimonials of esteem. They returned them, not without discrimination, but with too much generosity. Full of the consciousness of noble sentiments, they delighted in continually repeating them, and spared neither ink nor paper for that purpose. Hence all that epistolary intercourse, the unsubstantial nature of which now astonishes us. It contains nothing censurable. But it is difficult to conceive how men of superior genius could find any pleasure in such insignificant correspondence; and one cannot help regretting that such futilities should have been printed. At the same time we give a place on our shelves to these little collections, were it only to learn from them that even a man of superior mind stands in need of a proper scope of action. and that he

ceases to inspire all the interest he might fairly pretend to, when, too much wrapped up in self, he neglects to refresh his faculties in the world, which alone can furnish him subjects for his labours, and disclose to him the real extent of his progress.

It was at the period when these celebrated men were in the full activity and splendour of their career, that our young swarm began to move in its little circle. My young friends and I were also in a fair way to fall into the folly of that dull interchange of reciprocal praises, flatteries, and concessions. All that came from my pen was well received in this sphere. My associates could not find fault with what I produced merely from a wish to please them. Connexions of this kind, the basis of which is complaisance, are sure to infuse an effeminacy and loose facility into an author's style; and this phraseology would soon deprive it of every trace of originality, did not imperious necessity from time to time produce events which give fresh vigour to our minds and talents, by transporting us into a more elevated sphere.

It was thus that an unforeseen circumstance put all my self-sufficiency, pride, and presumption, to a rough trial. In this point of view, my meeting with Herder, and the connexion I consequently formed with him, was the most remarkable event of this period of my life, and that

which had the most important effects on the remainder of it. This man, who afterwards became so celebrated, had accompanied the prince of Holstein-Eutin in a journey which the latter had undertaken to divert his mind from melancholy reflections: he accordingly came with the prince to Strasburg. On hearing of his arrival we all wished to see him. It was chance that procured me this good fortune. I had gone to pay a visit at the Hotel de l'Esprit. At the foot of the staircase I met a man who seemed to me to be a clergyman, and who was likewise going up stairs. He wore his hair curled and dressed, a black coat, and a long silk cloak of the same colour, the end of which was tucked up into his pocket. This costume, elegant on the whole, although a little singular, I had heard described; and hence I was convinced that the celebrated individual whose arrival had been announced to us, now stood before me. The manner in which I accosted him was calculated to lead him to suppose that I knew him. He asked my name, which could be of no interest to him. My open manner, however, seemed to please him. He answered me with great civility, and when we got up stairs our conversation soon grew animated. On leaving him I asked his permission to see him again, which he granted, apparently with pleasure. I availed myself of this favour several times. I daily found myself more strongly at-

tracted towards him. There was in his manners a kind of unaffected delicacy which became him wonderfully. His face was round, his forehead large and commanding, his nose somewhat short; and although his lips were rather too thick, he had, on the whole, a very agreeably formed mouth. The effect of his black eyes, shaded by sable brows, was not destroyed by the redness and inflammation to which one of them was subject. He asked me many questions relative to my character and situation; and I, with my natural inclination to place confidence, kept nothing concealed from this new friend. But it was not long before the repulsive features of his character began to manifest themselves, and in some measure disconcerted me. I talked to him of the occupations and tastes of my youth, and amongst others of a collection of seals which I had made by the assistance of a friend of our family, whose correspondence was very extensive. I had arranged my collection in the order of the almanac, thus making myself acquainted with every body from potentates and princes of inferior rank to the lowest degrees of the nobility. I had often found it useful to consult the memorials of this heraldic collection, particularly at the time of the coronation of the king of the Romans. I used to speak of it with some pleasure; but Herder did not consider it of any value whatever. He not only totally disallowed

the importance I attached to it, but managed to make it appear ridiculous even to myself, and put me quite out of conceit with it.

I had ample opportunities of experiencing his contradictory humour; for he entertained an idea of separating from the prince, and was likewise desirous of getting the disorder in his eyes cured at Strasburg. This is one of the most painful and distressing of complaints; and Herder's case was peculiarly afflicting, as he could expect no cure but from a very painful operation, the success of which was uncertain.

At length he parted with the prince and took lodgings for himself. He resolved to undergo the operation, under the hands of Lobstein. I then felt all the advantage of having accustomed myself to subdue my sensibility, for hence I was enabled to assist at the operation, and render myself serviceable to my worthy friend in several ways. I had now an opportunity of admiring his firmness and resignation. Neither the numerous incisions, nor the most painful applications, could extort any token of impatience from him; indeed he seemed to suffer less than any of us: I say us, because he was attended not only by me but by a worthy Russian named Peglow, who had known Herder at Riga; and who, although no longer young, was perfecting himself in the art of surgery under Lobstein. Herder was sometimes good-natured and accessible, and

sometimes governed by a wayward humour. All men are more or less subject to similar changes ; there are few who can really subdue their temper, and many who possess only the appearance of this self-dominion. As to Herder, when bitterness and the spirit of contradiction got possession of his mind, it was to be attributed to his sufferings. The action of these causes constantly occurs in life ; and many characters are very ill appreciated, because people always suppose others to be in good health, and expect men to be always masters of themselves.

As long as Herder was under the surgeon's hands, I visited him every morning and evening. I sometimes staid all day. I soon accustomed myself to his caustic humour, as I daily found new reason to prize his excellent and uncommon qualities, the extent of his knowledge, the profundity of his mind. He was five years younger than me ; a difference of age which is sensibly perceived amongst young people. His acknowledged merit, and my esteem for such of his literary works as he had already published, gave him a great superiority over me ; but this benevolent churl, whilst he subjugated my mind, effected in it a singular revolution. Such of my elders as I had hitherto associated with, had endeavoured to improve me by treating me with great indulgence. But as to Herder, his approbation was never to be reckoned upon, in whatever manner it might



be sought. On one side, my strong attachment to and respect for him—and on the other, the self-dissatisfaction he excited in me, kept me in a state of internal contention and contradiction which I had never before experienced. His conversation, always highly interesting, his manner of interrogating and giving answers, suggested new reflections and ideas to my mind. At Leipsic I had confined myself within a narrow and circumscribed circle of occupations. During the latter part of my residence at Frankfort, I had made no great progress in the study of German literature. My half chemical, half mystical and religious researches, had misled me into the regions of obscurity; and I was a stranger to almost all that had appeared for some years in the vast sphere of letters. I now found myself initiated on a sudden, by Herder, into all the new attempts and views of our literary men, in which he himself appeared to take a very active part. By his fragments, critical works, and other compositions, he had placed himself on a level with the most eminent men our nation had to boast. It is impossible to form an adequate idea of the workings of a mind of such strength, or of the reflections and studies that nourished the rich and fertile genius which has since revealed itself in all Herder's publications.

Shortly after the commencement of our intimacy, he told me, in confidence, that he was

writing for the prize proposed by the academy of Berlin for the best treatise on the origin of languages. It was not long before he shewed me his manuscript, written in a very neat hand. I had never reflected on the subject of which he treated. I was too deeply plunged in the study of languages to think of seeking their origin. The question also appeared to me in some degree idle. In fact, if God created man complete, he must have endowed him with language as well as other faculties. In the same manner as man must soon have remarked, that he was able to walk and to make use of his hands to seize the objects within his reach, he must also have perceived that he could make use of his throat to sing, and modify his tones by the help of his palate and lips. In admitting the divine origin of man, it was necessary to admit the same origin for language; and if man, considered as one of the parts of the great work of nature, was a natural being, language also was natural. My mind was as far from separating these two things as the soul and body. Silberschlag, mingling a sort of material doctrine with these arguments, had advocated the divine origin of language; that is to say, that, according to him, God had been the preceptor of the first man. Herder ascended still higher, in his treatise. He shewed how man, with the faculties he possessed, might and must have created a language for himself by

his own efforts. I read this treatise with great pleasure and benefit. But I was neither learned, nor profound thinker enough, to make up my mind very readily. I expressed to the author all the satisfaction I felt. I merely ventured to make a few observations, suggested by my manner of considering the subject. But neither my compliments nor my criticisms met with a favourable reception from him, and he turned them both into ridicule with some acrimony. His surgeon was either more ingenious or less patient than me: he escaped the reading of the treatise, declaring himself incapable of attending to such abstract matters, and insisting on our sitting down to our usual party of ombre, which we played every evening.

During the whole time of his fatiguing and painful cure, Herder's vivacity never diminished; but it decreased in good-nature daily. He could not write a note, even to ask for any thing he wanted, without inserting some caustic remark in it: for instance, writing to me one day to request the loan of the Letters of Brutus, which are included in the collection of those of Cicero, he amused himself with jesting on my name. This was, in my opinion, an unlucky species of pleasantry, from which he should have abstained. A man's name is not a cloak that may be pulled at pleasure by every one. It is a garment that exactly fits his shape; or rather, it is his very skin,

which expands with his growth, and which cannot be pierced or torn without wounding him.

In this note he reproached me, and not without reason, with attending more to the outside than the inside of my books. I had brought a certain number with me from Strasburg, amongst which were several fine editions from my father's collection. These I had arranged on some very neat shelves, with a full intention to make use of them. But how was I to find time for this purpose, amidst the thousand and one occupations I had created for myself? Herder, whose mind was intent on books, for which he had occasion every moment, laid hands on my fine collection the first time he paid me a visit; but soon perceived that I made scarcely any use of them. Being a declared enemy to every kind of false appearance and ostentation, he did not spare his jests and reproaches on this subject.

I had often talked to him about my visit to the Dresden gallery; but I had not yet learnt to distinguish the true merit of the Italian school, and my admiration was often bestowed on a work of an inferior class. This childish enthusiasm procured me a little epigram from Herder, which I have preserved.

But although this sarcastic humour often gave me pain, it was, on the whole, of service to me. I had already sacrificed my opinions and inclinations more than once for the sake of gaining ex-

perience and information. I now learned to endure raillery; endeavouring, at the same time, to discriminate between deserved censure and unjust sarcasms.

From Herder I learned to look upon poetry in a new point of view, with which I was much pleased. That of the Hebrews, on which he composed an excellent treatise, according to Lowth, his predecessor in that pursuit; the popular songs, into the origin of which in Alsace we were induced to inquire by his researches, and the primitive examples of this noble art, all testified, in his opinion, that poetry was not the privilege of a few individuals polished by careful cultivation, but an inherent faculty in the human mind. I engaged with eagerness in all these studies; and my avidity to learn equalled the generous zeal of my instructor. I was, however, desirous not to discontinue the studies I had begun in various natural sciences; and as we have always time enough when we know how to employ it well, I undertook this double and triple task with success. The proof that the few weeks we passed together at this time were well employed is, that all the works which Herder afterwards executed successively were conceived at this period, and that our common labours brought me into the most favourable disposition for completing, extending, and connecting, with a more elevated prospect of the future, all the reflections I had previously made, and all the know-

ledge I had acquired. Had Herder been more methodical, I should have had in him the most invaluable of guides; but he was more inclined to try and to excite, than to conduct and direct. He had a high opinion of Hamann's writings. He put them into my hands; but instead of teaching me to read them, and rendering the march of this extraordinary mind intelligible to me, it was an amusement to him to see me gesticulating in a manner which certainly was singular enough, when I was torturing my mind in order to discover the meaning of those pages so truly worthy of the sibyls. Nevertheless I derived some pleasure from this perusal; and I engaged in it, notwithstanding the repugnance which my ignorance created, on the principle with which the author sets out, and with a view to the end at which he aims.

Herder's cure was still delayed, and Lobstein appeared uncertain and irresolute in his proceedings. Our anxieties pervaded all our intercourse; Herder became quite impatient and unhappy. They now began to ascribe the failure of the operation to the too violent tension of his mind, to the vivacity, and even to the gaiety of our conversations. These reproaches obliged him to repress his usual activity. In short, after all his tortures, he was obliged to relinquish all hopes of a cure; and, to avoid a greater evil, it was necessary to enlarge the wound. Herder's firmness during the operation appeared to us admira-

ble ; and there was something sublime in his melancholy resignation to the idea of being afflicted for life with such an infirmity. This disorder, which disfigured his noble and pleasing countenance, must have been cruelly felt by him, as he had formed an intimacy at Darmstadt with a young lady of great merit, whose heart he had gained, and to whom he expected to be united by indissoluble ties. He had submitted to this painful operation chiefly to enable him to appear before his mistress, on his return, with a more easy heart and a more agreeable exterior. Although his hopes had been disappointed, he hastened to quit Strasburg ; and as his residence there had been as expensive as disagreeable, I borrowed a sum of money for him, which he promised to return me by a day fixed. The time elapsed, and the money did not arrive. At length I received it, with a letter from Herder, who did not depart from his usual character on this occasion, for instead of thanks and excuses, his letter, written in irregular verse, was full of ingenious and lively raillery.

We ought never to mention our own imperfections or those of others to the public, but when there are hopes that such disclosures may be useful. What I have above related suggests some reflections.

Gratitude and ingratitude are amongst those phenomena which are every instant recurring

in the moral world, and respecting which opinions always differ. I have accustomed myself to distinguish in this matter three different shades: the forgetting of benefits, ingratitude, and repugnance to gratitude. The first defect is born with man: it is inherent in our nature; it is the result of that happy levity with which we forget our joys and sorrows; a faculty without which it would be impossible to proceed in life. Indeed, man stands in need of so much external aid to render his life supportable, that were he to attempt to repay by gratitude all that he owes to the sun, the earth, to God and nature, to his ancestors and parents, his friends and companions, he would have neither time nor sensibility left for the enjoyment of so many benefits. But if he suffers this levity to increase upon him, it is soon succeeded by a cold indifference; and at length he looks upon his benefactor only as a being who is a stranger to him, and whom he does not even scruple to injure whenever he can gain any advantage by it. It is to this disposition of mind alone that I give the name of ingratitude. As to a repugnance to acknowledgment, or the accepting of a benefit in a morose and ungracious manner, this sentiment is very uncommon, and none but superior men are capable of feeling it. Such men, conscious of their extraordinary faculties, cannot, if born in an inferior or indigent class,



take a single step in the world without feeling the yoke of necessity press heavily upon them : they find themselves obliged to accept of assistance and support, by whatever hand it may be offered : the foolish pride of benefactors frequently embitters their kindness : all that the person obliged receives is of a material nature, and what he returns is of a much more elevated value. There cannot, therefore, be any compensation in the case. Lessing, who was initiated in the flower of his age into a perfect knowledge of the things of the world, has expressed himself on this subject with more gaiety than bitterness. But Herder did not, like him, know how to make up his mind : on the contrary, he wasted his best days in tormenting others as well as himself. Not all the strength of his mind had sufficed to teach him to temper this morose humour produced by the difficulties he had met with in youth.

It is, however, a thing which we may very well undertake ; for our perfectibility is a natural light which is always ready to instruct us respecting our inclinations, and whose benevolent aid assists us in regulating them. What we have particularly to guard against in such cases, is taking our imperfections too much to heart ; and having recourse, in order to cure ourselves of them, to means which are too harsh, and too much above our strength. The best way to wean ourselves from certain faults is to

do it in play, as it were, and by easy expedients. Thus, it is easy to entertain the sentiment of gratitude in our hearts, and even to make it a necessity, by encouraging it as a habit.

For instance, I am naturally as little inclined to gratitude as any one; and it would even be easy for the lively sense of a present dissatisfaction, to lead me, first to forget a benefit, and next to ingratitude. In order to avoid falling into this error, I early accustomed myself to take pleasure in reckoning up all I possessed, and ascertaining by whose means I acquired it:—I think on the persons to whom I am indebted for the different articles in my collections; I reflect on the circumstances, chances, and most remote causes, owing to which I have obtained the various things I prize, in order to pay my tribute of gratitude to whomsoever has a right to it. All that surrounds me is thus animated in my sight, and becomes connected with affectionate remembrances. It is with still greater pleasure that I dwell on the objects the possession of which does not fall within the dominion of the senses; such as the sentiments I have imbibed, and the instruction I have received. Thus my present existence is exalted and enriched by the memory of the past; my imagination recalls to my heart the authors of the good I enjoy; a sweet remi-

niscence attends the recollection, and I am rendered incapable of ingratitude.

Before I dismiss the subject of my connexion with Herder, I have still some observations to make. Nothing could be more natural than that I should daily become more reserved with respect to communicating to my Mentor the studies and labours in which I engaged. He had often made my inclinations a subject of derision; above all, my predilection for Ovid's *Metamorphoses* had been treated by him with most severe criticism. In vain did I repeat to him that nothing could be better adapted for the recreation of a youthful fancy than to dwell in this circle of gods and demi-gods, in the smiling and magnificent countries of Greece and Italy; in vain did I appeal to the opinion of a grave author whom I have already quoted, and endeavour to corroborate it by my own observations. My eloquence was entirely thrown away. According to Herder, there was nothing in all this poetry from which any fruit could be immediately gathered. It gave us no knowledge of Greece, of Italy, of the ancient world, or of one more civilized; it was a mere imitation of more ancient poems—a collection of pictures executed with much mannerism, such as might be expected from a poet polished to a fault. In fact, in spite of all I could say, I was compelled to yield; and my dear Ovid almost became indif-

ferent to me: for there is no inclination or habit, however strong, which can long hold out against the criticisms of a superior man, in whom one has placed confidence. They will always make some impression; and when we can no longer love without restraint, passion is almost extinct.

I concealed from Herder, with the greatest care, the interest I felt in certain subjects which had in a manner rooted themselves in my soul, and were by degrees taking a poetical aspect. These were Goetz Von Berlichingen\* and Faust†.

\* This hero of Goëthe's first tragedy was one of those German gentlemen of the fifteenth century, who, saving their fealty to the Emperor, whose sovereignty they acknowledged, pretended to an absolute independence, thought themselves exempt from all civil law, and free to right themselves; and thus wished to perpetuate feudal anarchy. He was lord of Jaxthausen, a village with a castle on the Jaxt, in the palatinate of the Rhine. He had a long series of disputes with the bishop of Bamberg.—Ed.

† Faust (John), the hero of a piece of Goëthe's, some fragments of which Madame de Staël has translated in her book on Germany, was, according to historians, born in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the son of a peasant of Weimar or Kündling. He had taken his degree of doctor in theology. Disgusted with that science, he engaged in the study of medicine and astrology, and at length abandoned himself to that of magic. According to the tales which superstition has long passed current respecting this learned man, he conjured up the Devil, and forced an infernal spirit into his service, who is called Mephistopheles. Faust made a covenant with him for the term of twenty-four years; during which period he traversed

The life of the former had made a deep impression upon me. The rough and honourable character of this independent man, at a period of savage anarchy, inspired me with the liveliest interest. In the popular drama of which Faust is the hero, I found more than one tone which vibrated strongly in my very soul. I also had passed through the circle of the sciences, and had early convinced myself of their vanity. All my endeavours to find felicity in life had hitherto proved fruitless. I delighted in meditating on these subjects in my solitary hours, although as yet without writing any thing. But what I was particularly anxious to conceal from Herder's knowledge was my mystico-cabalistic chemistry, and all my researches of that kind. I was, however, still fond of carrying them on in secret, and of collecting the results of these pursuits with more order and regularity than before. Of all my poetical labours, I believe that the only one which I then communicated to my Mentor was the play of the *Accomplices*; but I do not remember that he gave me any opinion or encouragement on this piece. He was always

the earth, descended into hell, travelled in the celestial spheres, and, at the expiration of the fatal period, had his neck twisted by the Devil. These fables relating to Doctor Faust are very popular in Germany, and many German writers have brought this pretended magician on the stage. But even the existence of such a man has been doubted.—ED.

the same in every thing. Still his opinions operated upon my mind with powerful influence; and if they did not render me satisfied with myself, they at least appeared worthy of my whole attention. Every thing of his, even to his handwriting, had a magical influence over me. I do not think I ever tore or threw away, I will not say a single one of his letters, but even an address written by him. But, owing to frequent removals, I do not now possess a single trace of this period so singular, so happy, and so pregnant with future interest.

Let us now leave my sick friend's apartment for a moment, and breathe a less confined air. Let us mount to the top of the Minster, to that vast platform where our youthful band often assembled with glass in hand to salute the setting sun.\* There we often suspended our conversation, to indulge in the contemplation of the landscape before us. Here we used to exercise our powers of vision. Each endeavoured to discover the most distant objects; and, with the assistance of a good telescope, we examined one after another the places which pleased us most. There was a little canton which possessed a secret charm to me, although it was not remarkable in

\* By a fine setting sun the mountains of the Jura may be clearly distinguished from the top of the cathedral of Strasburg; and the chain of the Alps and Montblanc may even be perceived as greyish points at a very remote distance. *Ed.*

this magnificent scene. On these occasions the accounts we gave each other excited our curiosity; we often planned little excursions, and sometimes even carried our schemes into immediate effect.

Dear and delightful Sesenheim, with what pleasure did I return to thy fertile smiling plain, with my friend Wieland, after having visited the heights of the Vosges in one of these unpremeditated tours! The beauty of the country attracted my eyes, but was far from occupying my thoughts. I thought only of the happiness of approaching a young person to whom my heart was wholly devoted, and whom I found equally worthy of my esteem and love. Before I enter this rural asylum with my friend, let me state the circumstances that gave rise to this tender attachment, increased its ardour, and doubled the happiness which it procured me.

From the manner in which I had recently spent my time at Frankfort, and from the nature of the studies in which I had engaged when there, it may easily be conceived that I ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> much in arrear with respect to the knowledge of new works. My occupations at Strasburg had not permitted me to fill up this blank previously to the commencement of my acquaintance with Herder; and I found his conversation very useful in making me acquainted with the most modern compositions. Amongst these pro-

ductions he pointed out the *Vicar of Wakefield*, as an excellent work, and he himself read it to us in the German translation.

He had a very peculiar manner of reading, of which those who have heard him preach may form an idea. He read every thing, and even this romance, in a grave and simple tone. Averse to all dramatic imitation, he avoided not only the variety of accents allowable and proper in the reading of a narrative, but even that slight change in intonation which marks what any one says, and distinguishes the narrator from the personages. From the mouth of Herder, every thing flowed on in an uniform tone, but without monotony, as if no actors had been supposed present, and all had been narration. One would have thought that these imaginary beings did not act on his mind like living personages, and only flitted gently by him like faint shadows. Yet this manner of reading had an inconceivable charm in his mouth; for deeply sensible as he was of the interest of every part of a work, capable of appreciating all the value of the variety that prevailed in it, he made the merit of any production the more conspicuous, by taking care not to distract his audience by the skill evinced in the details, or to destroy the impression of the whole by the disproportionate force of particular passages.

A protestant clergyman is perhaps the finest



subject for a modern Idyl that can be found. He appears, like Melchizedec, to combine the characters of priest and king. Devoted to agriculture, the most innocent of all terrestrial conditions of man, he is almost always engaged in the same occupations, and confined to the circle of his family connexions. He is a father, a master, and a cultivator; and, by the union of these characters, a true member of society. On these worldly but pure and noble foundations, his higher vocation rests. To him belongs the privilege of guiding man in the path of life, of conferring his spiritual education, of sanctifying all the remarkable periods of his existence, of instructing, fortifying, and consoling him; and when the consolations of his present state become insufficient, of revealing to him the hopes of a more favourable hereafter. Let us imagine such a man, animated by the purified sentiments of humanity, strong enough not to sink under the pressure of any event, and thus rising above the crowd, of whom neither purity nor firmness can be expected: let us ascribe to him the qualities necessary for his functions, perfect serenity, indefatigable activity, characterized by the anxious wish not to lose a moment in doing good,—and we shall have the model of a good pastor.

Add to this the necessity not only of living within a narrow circle, but of passing occasionally into a circle still inferior. Let us endow

him with good humour, a forgiving temper, constancy, and all the qualities which distinguish a decided character. Let him also possess excessive indulgence, and a degree of patience in enduring the faults of others which affects the heart, and yet provokes laughter; and we shall have a perfect representation of our excellent pastor of Wakefield.

The picture of this character in the course of the pleasures and pains of life, the still increasing interest of the fable, by the union of what is natural with what is uncommon and singular, make this romance one of the best that has ever been written. It has likewise the great advantage of being completely moral, and even christian, in the purest sense; for it represents probity rewarded, and perseverance in virtue strengthened by perfect confidence in God. It confirms belief in the final triumph of good over evil; and all without any tincture of bigotry or pedantry. The antipathy of the author to these two vices appears from time to time in ironical passages full of sense and humour. Goldsmith unquestionably penetrated deep into the beauties as well as the deformities of the moral world; but he is also much indebted to his English birth, and to the opportunities afforded him by the manners of his nation. The family he has chosen for the subject of his descriptions is one of the inferior degrees of civil life, and is

nevertheless in contact with the great. In all its poverty, which still increases, it remains connected with the wealthy. Its little bark floats amidst the stormy billows of social life in England, sometimes aided and sometimes ill used by the immense fleet which navigates around it.

When Herder read this work to us, he blamed the excessive sensibility that overpowered me at every page. I felt as a man, and a young man. All was to me true, living, and present. As to him, who considered only the character and form of the work, he saw clearly that I was swayed by the interest of the subject; and of this he did not approve. Peglow's reflections, which were none of the most ingenious, were still worse received. But what Herder found most fault with was our want of sagacity, in not being able to foresee the events which the author meant to bring about, the contrasts he intended to exhibit. It was evident that a book was in his view nothing but a production of art, and that he wished us to look upon it only in the same light; but we were at a period of life in which it is very excusable to allow works of art to affect us in the same manner as those of nature.

The reading of this work had produced a strong impression on my mind: I found myself, almost without observing it, in that disposition to ironical indifference which exalts us above

prosperity and adversity, death and life ; a disposition which renders it so easy to create a truly poetical world of our own. But I little expected to be shortly transported from this imaginary world to a real one exactly similar to it.

My table-companion, Weyland, enlivened his tranquil and busy life by occasional visits to that part of Alsace in which he was born, in order to see his relations and friends. During my little excursions he several times did me the favour of introducing me to agreeable families. He had often mentioned a clergyman who lived about six leagues from Strasburg, in the vicinity of Drusenheim, where he possessed a very good curacy, with a very intelligent wife, and two amiable daughters. Weyland was always praising the hospitality and pleasantness of this house. This was more than sufficient to attract a young cavalier, already accustomed to devote his leisure days and hours to such excursions. We therefore made an engagement to visit this place ; and it was agreed between my friend and me that he was to say neither good nor harm of me, that he should seem indifferent respecting me, and that I should appear, if not ill-dressed, at least in a negligent costume, by no means indicative of opulence. He himself expected some amusement from this masquerade.

To lay aside, occasionally, external advantages, in order to give more scope to the influence of personal character, is a whim which may be excused in eminent personages. The incognito of princes and the adventures it produces are always very interesting: they are disguised divinities who feel more sensibly the good that is done them whilst they are thus unknown, and who can easily tolerate or escape from any circumstances that are disagreeable. It seems natural enough that Jupiter should amuse himself with Philemon and Baucis; or Henry the Fourth, after his hunting party, amongst his peasants; and they are admired for it: but that a young man without name or importance should expect to derive any pleasure from an incognito, will, no doubt, appear to many an unpardonable piece of presumption. But as my business is to give a true account, rather than to discuss the merit of the sentiments and actions I have to relate, I hope my readers will pardon my caprice for this once; particularly as I can offer an excuse for it of some little weight, which is, that from my infancy, my father, grave as he was, had encouraged my taste for masquerading.

I had so well disguised myself by the help of old and borrowed clothes, and the arrangement of my hair, that my friend could not help laughing, on the road; particularly at my perfect imitation of the air, the gestures, and awkward horsemanship

of those poor devils who are called in Germany *Latin travellers*. A beautiful road, delightful weather, and the vicinity of the Rhine, put us in excellent spirits. We made a short halt at Drusenheim; my friend to dress himself, and I to rehearse my character. This country is one of the fine plains of Alsace. We amused ourselves in galloping over its verdant meadows. On reaching Sesenheim, we left our horses at the inn, and proceeded towards the parsonage-house. "Do not imagine," said Wieland, pointing out the house at a distance, "that this is a poor cottage, as the outside seems to indicate: you will find the interior the more agreeable." We entered the fore-court. The appearance of this habitation pleased me much. It reminded me of those picturesque situations, with which I had been so highly pleased in the works of the Flemish masters; but it bore evident marks of antiquity: the house, barn, and stable were all in that equivocal state which characterizes every building that cannot be preserved, and has not been repaired or rebuilt.

The house, like the rest of the village, was quiet. We found the rector alone; the whole family was in the fields. My friend went out to meet the ladies, and I remained alone with our host. "You are perhaps surprised," said he, "to find me so ill accommodated, in a rich village, and with a pretty good place: it is owing to inde-

“ cision. The commune and my superiors proposed to have the house rebuilt. Several plans have already been drawn, tried, and changed; and this state of uncertainty has already lasted so long that my patience is almost exhausted.” To these words he added a very original picture of the characters he had to deal with, and thus gave me to understand how it happened that the parsonage-house was not yet rebuilt. There was this peculiarity in the confidence he was placing in me, that he spoke to me as to a man whom he had known ten years, without appearing to pay the slightest attention to my person. My friend returned with the rector’s wife: she seemed to observe me more closely. Her features were regular, and her physiognomy bespoke great intelligence. She must have been handsome when young. There was nothing disagreeable in her present thinness, caused by the lapse of years; and, when her back was turned, she might still have been taken for a young woman. The elder of the sisters came running in, and asked for her sister Frederica: the father said he had not seen her, and she went out again to seek her.

She returned in haste, vexed at not having found her sister. Every one expressed impatience to know what had become of her. Her father alone, maintaining a calm demeanour, pacified his wife and elder daughter, by declaring that

Frederica would speedily return; and in fact she entered at that very moment. She seemed a favourite star whose return gladdened this little terrestrial paradise. The two young ladies were dressed in the German fashion; and this national costume became the amiable Frederica wonderfully well. She wore a white, short, round gown, ornamented with a falbelas, which half exposed to view a taper leg and most delicate little foot. A white corset fitted her shape, and a black taffety apron completed her half village and half city dress. Slender and light, she walked as if she had nothing to carry; and yet her neck appeared almost too delicate to support the weight of the tresses of light hair which adorned her beautiful head. Her blue eyes gazed around with an expression of gaiety; and her nose had a curve which seemed to mock all care, as if it had been a total stranger to this world. I was instantly sensible of all her attractions and loveliness.

I soon got acquainted with the whole family, for the young ladies began a very lively conversation respecting their relations, friends, and uncles; and by means of this magic lantern, which exhibited a swarm of uncles, aunts, and acquaintance, I might soon have fancied myself in the midst of a numerous and bustling crowd. Each of the family had exchanged a few words with me: Frederica was the first to enter into a regular con-



versation. Seeing me looking at some pieces of music which I found lying open, she asked if I played the harpsichord; and on my answering in the affirmative, she handed me a piece to perform: but her father would not allow it, saying it was his daughters' duty first to play something in honour of their guests.

Frederica began without further entreaty, and displayed all the talent that is to be acquired in the country. She attempted to sing a languishing and melancholy air; but finding its expression unsuitable to her, she rose, and said laughing: "When we take a walk we shall hear some of our pretty Alsatian songs, which are much better than this."

At supper I was so absent that I sat pensive and dumb, except when the vivacity of the elder girl, or the kindness of the younger, broke my reveries. Every thing seemed combined to exhibit the family of the Vicar of Wakefield to me in the liveliest colours. The rector himself, indeed, would not altogether bear comparison with that excellent man; but where were we to look for the equal of Primrose? But all the dignity of the mistress of the house was to be found in our hostess; it was impossible to observe her without paying a tribute of respect to the calmness, freedom, and attractiveness of her manners.

Although the elder of the two girls did not

possess all the beauty of Olivia, she was tall and well shaped: she had all the vivacity and activity of her prototype, and was always ready to support her mother. It was easy to recognize in Frederica the amiable Sophia Primrose. The rector's condition in life, the situation of his family, the conversation, and even some of the circumstances, all bore the same character of resemblance. At length, when the youngest of the rector's children, his son, ran into the room and sat down amongst us, almost without noticing the new guests, I was very near crying out "What! Moses too!"

During supper, several pleasant anecdotes were related in the course of conversation. Frederica, beside whom I sat, took occasion from them to describe the different places which had been mentioned, and which were worth seeing. One little story produced another, and I joined in this chat by furnishing my share of the same kind of discourse. As the good home-made wine was not spared, I should have been in danger of forgetting the character I had undertaken to support, if my prudent friend had not seized the pretext of a fine moonlight to propose a walk. He offered his arm to the elder of the two sisters; I took that of the younger; and we walked across the meadow, more occupied with the sky which glittered above our heads than with the country before us. Frederica's conversation,

however, did not appear to be inspired by the moonlight. Nothing she said indicated or could excite sensibility. She seemed, however, to pay particular attention to me, endeavouring as much as possible to make me acquainted with the country, and her own connexions. All who have once visited us, added she, have returned to see us. She hoped I should not prove an exception.

I enjoyed in silence the description she gave me of the little world in which she lived, and her portraits of the persons whom she most valued. She represented her own situation in so clear and pleasing a manner, that it produced a singular effect upon me. I began to regret deeply that I had not sooner lived in the sphere which surrounded her; and I felt at the same time a painful emotion of jealousy in thinking of those who had enjoyed the pleasure of being acquainted with her. I rigidly examined all she told me respecting her male friends, cousins, and neighbours, as if I had had a right to do so, exercising my ingenuity in conjectures first on one, and then on another; but nothing could I discover, for all her friends were utterly unknown to me. She still grew more talkative, and I more silent. The darkness of night deprived me of the sight of her face as well as of that of nature. I was alone with her voice, as it were, and listened in a delightful trance to the charming and ingenuous

prattle in which the sweetness and purity of her character appeared at every word.

When Weyland and I retired into a spare bedroom which had been prepared for us, he began to rally me on the surprise he had caused me by bringing me into the midst of a family which was the very image of the Primroses; and I could not help laughing at the circumstance, whilst I expressed my gratitude. "Come," said he, "the romance goes on well. We may now fancy ourselves at Wakefield; and your lordship, disguised as you are, may perform the part of Burchell. But as in real life we have no occasion for the villains of romance, I shall undertake the character of the nephew, but mean to conduct myself better." I then asked if Frederica had loved, if she had now any particular inclination, or was engaged. He gave me satisfactory answers to all my enquiries. I thank you, I replied; for if she had regained her indifference after the loss of a lover, or if she had been promised to another, I would instantly have ceased to think of her.

Although our conversation lasted a great part of the night, I awoke at dawn of day. I was impatient to see her again; it seemed that nothing could prevent me: but, as I was getting up, I turned pale at the sight of the detestable costume in which I had so unluckily wrapped myself. I might, indeed, have dressed my hair

better than the preceding day ; but I felt dreadfully uneasy under the old great coat I had borrowed, the short sleeves of which gave me the most grotesque appearance.

Whilst I was thus enraged with my dress, my friend, who was now awake, was admiring his own fine silk surtout, in all the complacency of a conscience guiltless of all disguise. I had watched it with envious eyes as it hung spread out on the back of a chair: had it fitted me I would have seized it; Wieland would have been good-natured enough to put on my old rags ; and our comedy would have been brought to a pleasant *denouement* the same morning. But unluckily this exchange was impossible. It was equally impossible for me to think of appearing before Frederica, in the old frock of a poor student in theology ; and thus a second time deceive her, who had the preceding day treated me with such peculiar kindness, notwithstanding my disguise. Whilst I thus stood undetermined and pondering, Wieland, stretched at his ease in bed, said calmly, “ Upon my word, that is a “ very wretched dress of yours.”—“ Well,” replied I, “ I know what to do : farewell ; make my excuses to the family.”—“ Are you mad ?” cried my friend, jumping out of bed to detain me. But I had cleared the staircase, the house, and the fore-court in a twinkling : I saddled my

horse, threw myself on his back, and galloped off furiously towards Drusenheim.

I soon felt how dear it cost me to leave the house. I thought of the charming walk of the preceding day, and the delightful hope I had formed of seeing Frederica again. The wish to realize that hope soon inspired me with a fortunate idea. I had remarked on that day, at the inn at Drusenheim, that the landlord's son, who was extremely well-dressed, was of my own size. My scheme was no sooner conceived than executed. I returned to Drusenheim, ran to the stable, and proposed to the young man to lend me his clothes for the purpose of a little pleasantry I wished to play off at Sesenheim. I had not much difficulty in persuading him: he readily consented to my request, applauding me for contriving a surprise to divert the young ladies at the parsonage; they were so good, so amiable, he said, particularly Mademoiselle Frederica. Whilst we were talking we changed our clothes. Mine were not a very sufficient pledge for his fine Sunday suit; but he had confidence in me, and my horse in his stable. When I had adorned myself at his expense, I embraced him; and the worthy fellow seemed to admire himself in his twin brother. I dressed my hair nearly in the manner of his; and I thought it as well to increase the resemblance by blackening my eye-

brows. When he presented me his hat adorned with ribands, "Have you nothing to send to the parsonage?" said I.—"Yes," said he, "but you would have to wait two hours; for it will take that time to bake a cake which I shall take the liberty to offer to the rector's wife, and which you might carry with you." I resolved to wait these two everlasting hours. At length I received the cake, and set out in haste; the sun shining brightly, and I proud of my passport, and escorted part of the way by my new brother.

I carried my present, nicely wrapped up in a napkin. Before I had proceeded far, I perceived at a distance my friend with the two young ladies, who were advancing to meet me. My heart beat as if uneasy under this disguise. I stopped to take breath, considering how I should present myself. The party approached. Frederica, who had seen me at a distance, said, "George, what are you carrying?" I took off my hat, with which I concealed my face, lifting up my packet that she might see it.—"A cake!" cried she, "how is your sister?" "Very well," said I, endeavouring to imitate the accent of Alsace. "Carry that to the house," said the elder sister, "and wait for us; we shall return presently." At these words I hastened on, and soon reached the parsonage. I found nobody at home; and presuming that the rector was busy in his closet, I sat down on a bench before the door, and pulled my hat over my eyes.

I do not recollect that I ever felt more happy. I found myself once more seated by that house whence a few hours before I had departed almost in despair, expecting a long and sad separation. I had already seen my beloved once more, and heard her sweet voice. I expected her every moment; I well knew that I should be discovered, but the discovery could not disgrace me. My manner of introducing myself was as good a jest as any of those which we had laughed at the preceding day. Love and necessity are the best of instructors; they had acted in concert, and their pupil had profited by their lessons. The servant returned home, and went into the house without recognizing me. The rector came to the window; taking me for George, he recommended me not to depart without some refreshment. So far all was right; when left to myself I sighed at the thought of the approaching return of the young folks. But on a sudden, the mistress of the house, passing near me, recognized my face which I had not time to conceal with my hat.—“I thought “to find George,” said she, after a momentary silence; “and it is you, young gentleman: how “many forms have you at command then?”—“I have but one,” I replied, “for any serious “purpose; but in order to amuse you I would “assume as many as you please.”—“I will not “betray you,” said she, laughing; “but walk



“aside for a moment, for the young ones are re-  
turning, and I will assist you in your frolic.” I withdrew, walking towards a little wood that crowned a neighbouring height. On reaching this spot a delightful landscape suddenly burst on my view. On one side were the village and church of Sesenheim; on the other, Drusenheim, and the wooded isles of the Rhine; in front the mountains of the Vosges; and lastly, the lofty spire of Strasburg cathedral. Seated on one of the benches with which this walk was furnished, I remarked on the largest tree a little tablet bearing this inscription: “*Frederica’s Repose.*” I did not imagine that my arrival in this asylum chosen by her could possibly disturb this repose; for a rising passion is as incapable of foreseeing the future as of accounting for its own origin: its peculiar privilege is to enjoy the present fully, and with a relish that banishes every unfavourable presage.

I was just yielding myself up to my pleasing meditations, when I heard footsteps; it was Frederica herself.—“George,” cried she, as she approached, “what are you doing here then?” “It is not George,” I replied, darting towards her; “it is one who asks a thousand pardons!” She looked at me with astonishment, but immediately recovered herself and said, with a deep sigh: “Malicious creature, how you have frightened me!”—“My first masquerade,” I replied,

“led to this one, and you will no doubt excuse  
“ my present disguise, since it reminds you of  
“ one whom you treat with kindness.” Her face,  
which had turned somewhat pale, was now tinged with the most beautiful colour. “You shall  
“ not, at any rate, be less welcome than  
“ George,” said she. “Your friend has told us  
“ all that occurred up to the moment of your departure. Let me hear the rest of your adventures.” I then described to her my perplexity about my first costume, and my flight, in so comical a manner that she laughed heartily. The rest I told her with the reserve which her modesty required; but with expressions sufficiently passionate to pass in any romance for a declaration of love. I concluded, after expressing to her all the pleasure I felt at seeing her again, by kissing her hand, which she did not withdraw from mine. I know not how long we had remained thus beside each other, when we suddenly heard Frederica called several times: it was the voice of her sister. “Come nearer  
“ me,” said my lovely Frederica, bending in order to conceal me in part, “and turn round  
“ that you may not be immediately recognized.” At that moment her sister came up. Weyland accompanied her, and both, on seeing us, stood as if petrified.

The surprise and terror one feels at suddenly seeing a raging fire burst from a peaceful roof,

are not to be compared to the consternation that seizes us at the unexpected sight of what we deemed morally impossible. "What means this?" cried the elder sister, affrighted; "you with George! your hands clasped in each other's!" "Dear sister," answered Frederica, in a pensive tone, "the poor youth implores my pity, he will sue for yours too; but you must pardon him at once."—"I do not understand it at all," replied her sister, shaking her head and looking at Weyland, who, in his usual manner, remained calm, and observed the scene before him without betraying any emotion. Frederica now rose, and leading me forward, said, "Come, fear nothing, your pardon is granted."—"Yes," said I, approaching her sister, "I stand in need of your pardon." She drew back, uttered a cry, and turned as red as fire; then threw herself on the grass, and began to laugh immoderately. Weyland, also laughing, exclaimed, "You are an excellent youth!" and shook me by the hand several times in the most affectionate manner.

After mutual explanations we took our way towards the village. As we approached the garden, Frederica and I entered it first. Olivia, for that is the name I shall henceforth give to the elder of the two sisters, called the servant to speak to her, and leaving me at a distance, went towards her. The girl was pretty. Olivia told her that George had broken off with Babet, and

wished to marry her. This intelligence did not seem to displease the pretty villager. Olivia then called me to confirm what she had just said. The poor girl's eyes were fixed on the ground : I was close to her before she had seen me ; but when she looked up and beheld a strange face, she screamed out and took to flight. Presently afterwards Olivia met the young man who was in love with his fellow-servant, repeated to him that George had deserted Babet, that he was to marry Lise, and that the latter was very well pleased with the arrangement. "I always thought " it would be so," said the poor lad in great affliction.

I had induced the girl to return, and we approached the lad, who turned away and wanted to escape ; but Lise detained him, and whilst she undeceived him we proceeded together towards the house. Dinner was on table, and the rector in the parlour ; Olivia made me walk behind her, and going in, asked her father if he would allow George to dine with them that day, and keep his hat on. " Oh ! by all means," said the rector. She then brought me forward, and I kept my hat on. On a sudden she pulled it off, made a bow and a scrape, and desired me to do the same. The rector now recognized me, and, without laying aside his sacerdotal gravity, cried out, menacing me with his finger : " Ah ! ha ! Mr. Candidate, you have soon

“ changed characters ; and so I have lost an “ assistant that yesterday promised he would “ often take my place in the pulpit.” He laughed very heartily as he saluted me, and we sat down to table. It was some time before Moses came in. The better to deceive him I had been placed, not, as the day before, between the two sisters, but at the end of the table, a place which George frequently occupied. When Moses came in he gave me a pretty hard slap on the shoulder, saying, “ George, I wish you a good appetite.”—“ Thank you, sir,” said I. My voice and strange countenance seemed at first to astonish him ; but he soon recovered, ceased to look at me, and employed himself wholly in making up for lost time. After dinner the real George arrived, which only rendered the scene more lively. They tried to make him jealous by rallying him on having set up a rival to himself ; but he was not deficient, either in circumspection or address. He made, however, such a strange jumble of his discourse, by confounding together his mistress, his counterfeit, and the young ladies of the house, that it was at last impossible to discover of whom he was talking, and they were obliged to leave him to eat his share of his cake in tranquillity.

After dinner the father retired to take a nap. Mamma, as usual, was engaged in the affairs of her household. My friend asked me to relate a

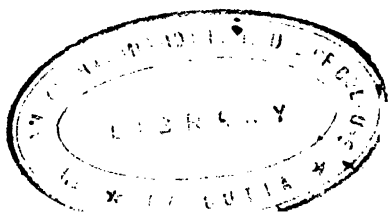
story. I consented. We retired into a pleasant harbour, and I recited a tale I have since written under the title of the New Melusina. I would have inserted it here, had I not been fearful that the sallies of the imagination might destroy the effect of a rural scene, the simplicity of which is its only merit. I obtained the tribute which usually attends the inventors and narrators of productions of this kind. To excite interest, to captivate the attention, to charm the mind by the prompt solution of an enigma which appears inexplicable, to deceive the auditors' expectation, dazzle him by a rapid succession of events, still increasing in singularity, to awaken pity and fear, to keep his attention unwearied, to excite emotion; and finally, to satisfy the mind by explaining the apparently serious mystery of the narration by some ingenious pleasantry; to present new pictures to the imagination, and new subjects of meditation to the thoughts; such were the objects of my composition, such the effects which I succeeded in producing.

This piece would, perhaps, excite surprise were it one day to be read amongst my works; but it must not be forgotten that every impression of this kind depends upon the influence the narrator exercises over his auditors. To write is to disfigure words. A calm and solitary perusal is a poor substitute for the impression made by speech.

I inherited from my father a certain sort of eloquence calculated to enforce my doctrines to my auditors; from my mother I derived the faculty of representing all that the imagination can conceive with energy and vivacity, that of giving an air of novelty to known inventions, of imagining new ones; and of inventing as I went on. But the first of these faculties generally made me tiresome to the company. Where, indeed, is the man who takes pleasure in listening to the ideas and opinions of another; particularly if that other be a young man, in whose judgment, not sufficiently enlightened by experience, little confidence is to be placed? My mother had best endowed me for pleasing others. The most futile tale has its charm; and the slightest narration is listened to with a kind of gratitude.

It was by means of stories which cost me nothing that I had acquired the love of children; fixed the attention of young people, by amusing them; and attracted that of persons of a riper age. In society it is often necessary to relinquish some more or less serious exercise of the mind, which is not practised there, and consequently to lose an enjoyment and an useful occupation. I have, however, throughout life, retained these two faculties, the valuable inheritance bequeathed to me by the authors of my being. They have combined themselves with a third, which arises from the desire I feel to ex-

press myself by comparisons and figures. It was with reference to these faculties, which the penetration of the ingenious Dr. Gall enabled him to discover, that he declared me born to become a popular orator. This assertion alarmed me not a little ; for had it been well-founded, as my nation has offered me no opportunity of exercising this talent, it would follow that every thing I have attempted in other pursuits would be merely the productions of a mind whose original vocation had been frustrated.





## CHAPTER XI.

THE little friendly circle to which I had related my romance was delighted with it. My auditors thought it combined the marvellous and the possible in a very scientific manner; and that probability was very well preserved in it. They urged me to reduce it to writing, which I readily promised to do, since it afforded me an excellent opportunity of renewing my visit, and keeping up an acquaintance so agreeable to me.

On returning to my occupations, I found myself more embarrassed than ever. A man who is naturally active encumbers himself with too many undertakings, and pushes on until some moral or physical obstacle warns him that he has presumed too far upon his strength.

I applied to the study of the law with just sufficient attention to enable me to take my degrees with some credit to myself. I had always found the study of medicine attractive, and was attached to it both by example and habit. Part of my time was devoted to society. How could I leave off my visits to families in which I had been treated with es-

teem and affection? Still I could easily have attended both to my studies and my friends, but for the burthen which Herder had imposed on me. He had torn away the veil which had hidden the nakedness of our literature from my sight. His cruel hand had uprooted many prejudices which had hitherto been dear to me. My native climate now afforded but a very small number of luminous stars; I saw in general nothing but transient glimmerings, where I had thought I perceived resplendent planets. He had almost deprived me of all the personal hopes with which I flattered myself, yet at the same time he led me into the broad and magnificent road which he intended to travel himself. He fixed my attention on his favourite writers, at the head of whom he placed Swift and Hamann; and after forcing me to stoop he endeavoured to raise me again with a vigorous hand. In this fermentation of spirits, the invasion of a new passion threatened almost to overthrow my reason. A physical indisposition attacked me whilst suffering under those mental disorders; after every meal my throat seemed stuffed almost to choking. I afterwards easily got the better of this complaint, by abstaining from a kind of red wine which was drunk at our *table d'hôte*, and of which I used to be fond. I had not experienced this tormenting ailment at Sesenheim, which increased my attachment

to that place. On returning to town, and to my usual mode of living when there, it attacked me again, to my great affliction. These vexations rendered me dejected and peevish; and my internal sufferings visibly affected my habits.

I was still attending the clinical lectures. We were all attached to our venerable professor, whose serenity of mind, and constant cheerfulness, were admirable. He made us observe the sick, and pointed out the symptoms and progress of their disorders. He inculcated this science by the aid of experiments perfectly in the style of Hippocrates. This was quite a new region to me; and his lessons exhibited a prospect which the imperfect light that I saw them in, rendered the more agreeable to me. The disgust which the sick occasioned me at first, diminished in proportion as I learned, by examining into their situation, to combine ideas which enabled me to perceive the possibility of the restoration of their strength. The professor considered me as a singular young man; but he looked with indulgence on the caprice which led me to abandon studies of a totally different nature, in order to attend his lectures. He concluded one day, not as on former occasions, by a lesson on the text of some disorder previously observed by us, but by saying pleasantly: "My friends, you have a few holidays before you; employ them in recruiting your health. Study

“ requires not only application and labour, but  
“ cheerfulness and freedom of mind. Range  
“ over this beautiful country ; those who belong  
“ to it will revisit its well-known fields with  
“ pleasure ; while the stranger will receive new  
“ impressions, and lay the foundation of agree-  
“ able recollections.”

There were but two of us in the auditory to whom this paternal advice was in reality addressed : I hope my companion understood it as well as I did ! To me it seemed a voice from heaven. I hastened to procure a horse and to equip myself with elegance. I sought Weyland, but could not meet with him. This disappointment did not, however, alter my plan. Unfortunately the preparations I had to make could not be completed so speedily as I wished. Although I galloped with all possible expedition, night overtook me on the road ; but I was in no danger of losing my way, as the moon shone brightly. A violent storm arose, but I spurred on, fearful only of being obliged to postpone the pleasure of seeing my mistress until the following morning.

It was late when I reached Sesenheim. I asked the host whether the people at the parsonage were still up. The young ladies had just returned thither. He thought he had heard them say they expected some one that evening. I should have preferred being the only visitor ;

however, I hastened to the house in hopes of at least reaching it first. I found the two sisters sitting near the door. My appearance did not seem to surprise them; but I was myself astonished to hear Frederica whisper to her sister, " 'Tis he; did I not tell you so?" They took me into the house. Supper was brought in. Their mother saluted me as an old acquaintance; but when Olivia looked at me she could not refrain from laughter.

The next morning I was informed of what I had been unable to comprehend the evening before. Frederica had laid a wager that I should come, and had felt great pleasure in seeing her presentiments fulfilled. Whenever a prediction is justified by the event, it raises the augur in his own opinion: he is induced to consider himself endowed with sensibility sufficiently refined to maintain mysterious relations with a distant object, or with sagacity enough to discern concealed but necessary affinities and connexions between different beings. Olivia's bursts of laughter were also explained to me. She confessed that she had been amused at seeing me dressed this time with so much elegance. As to Frederica, she attributed the pains I had taken, not to the suggestions of vanity, but solely to a desire to please her.

My mistress soon engaged me to take a walk. Her mother and sister were engaged in prepara-

tions for the reception of several guests. With what pleasure did I enjoy, by the side of Frederica, a charming morning sun beaming on the fields, as Hebel has so well represented it. She described the company that was expected, and begged me to assist her in contriving that we should divert ourselves in common as much as possible, and that a degree of order should prevail in our amusements. "People too commonly  
"separate," said she; "they make but feeble attempts at games and sport; so that at last  
"some are obliged to have recourse to cards,  
"and others to dancing."

The company was numerous, and animated by a sportive gaiety which the extreme good-nature of the rector and his wife, the beauty of the country, rural liberty, and the fineness of the weather promoted. Never had I felt my mind so free, or my heart so full of the felicity so thoroughly enjoyed in youth. Frederica and I had exchanged no formal vows; but was it necessary for us to say we loved each other? The more I saw and listened to her, the more her candour, mental purity, modesty, amiable manners, and the native graces of a correct and delicate mind, heightened her personal charms in my estimation. One fear alone, one puerile superstition, which I am bound to confess, imposed a severe reserve on me, which ill accorded with the passion I felt, or even with the innocent pleasures which custom

and frolicsome gaiety warrant. The malediction pronounced against me by Lucinda was fresh in my memory, and whenever our games of forfeits introduced those punishments so sweet to him who inflicts them and often to her who is condemned to undergo them, I felt myself restrained by a kind of superstitious fear, dreading lest the first female I embraced should be exposed to the effects of the anathema pronounced by an irritated lover. I had hitherto avoided every opportunity which had presented itself, and when Frederica informed me of these approaching sports, I vowed in my own mind to avert every threatening omen from her I loved. Vain oaths! A single morning devoted to pleasure, to delightful conversations with my beloved, whom I never quitted; our excursions, our frolics in the fields, the gaiety of our entertainments, increased by the pleasure of being in her company, and by the genial warmth of some excellent wine that was not spared, all combined to make me forget my fears and prudent resolutions. In the afternoon I could not escape the games of forfeits: nor did I even attempt to impede an amusement which seemed likely to favour my passion: I now desired it as earnestly as I had dreaded it. Frederica made mistakes which I was ordered to punish. With what transports of joy did I give this charming girl these first proofs of a passion usually pure and lively. She received them with an expression of reciprocal affection, allow-

ing me to read her satisfaction in her looks, and to discover the sentiments of which her modesty did not allow her to give testimonials so ardent as mine. These delightful moments, in which I had opportunities of evincing all my tenderness for Frederica, naturally led to a declaration. We had only to obey the impulses of our hearts in order to interchange a thousand assurances of a reciprocal attachment.

The rector could find no one amongst his guests that would listen to his complaints of the uncertainties and delays which attended the repairs of the parsonage. I lent an attentive ear to him, and offered to sketch him a plan. He readily accepted my proposal; and comparing our ideas together, I immediately made a draught of a plan, which, by his consent, I carried with me to finish at leisure. This commission I undertook with great pleasure, as it afforded me another pretext for repeating my visit to the parsonage. My mistress and I separated after a day passed in that pure and lively joy which the first innocent tokens of mutual passion and reciprocal confidence produce. It was the first time that my attachment had been returned with equal warmth; and I was exquisitely sensible of the happiness of inspiring a being so truly lovely and estimable with a tenderness like my own. Regardless of the future, and unconscious of evil, I abandoned myself freely to a sentiment which



appeared to me correct, and of the dangers attending which I had no suspicion. My young mistress and I had promised each other to cheer the tedious interval of absence by frequent correspondence. During the whole time that my studies detained me in the city, Frederica's letters assisted me to endure the unavoidable periods of our separation. These letters, in which she opened her heart with the utmost ingenuousness and grace, reminded me of all her amiable qualities, and increased my attachment to her. In reading them I still seemed to see her and talk to her. No sooner was I at liberty than I flew to Sesenheim, where I was always well received: I enjoyed the happiness of a day passed in company with my mistress, and returned to town gladdened by the hope of a similar day's pleasure. I had very carefully drawn the plan of the repairs of the parsonage: this plan, with which the rector was delighted, met with several objections from his friends, as almost always happens in society. ~~Wishing~~ <sup>Wishing</sup> to conciliate these friends, I promised to avail myself of their observations; and I consoled the worthy rector, who had been vexed at their objections, by promising that I would speedily furnish him with a better contrived plan. How could I fail to persevere, encouraged as I was by the desire to please this excellent man, and by the praises which Frederica lavished on my com-

plaisance. It was not long before I fulfilled my engagement; and I had now the satisfaction of being applauded by those whose self-love I had conciliated at the expense of my own.

Frederica's parents had the most perfect confidence in her virtue and my character. The repugnance I had at first evinced to games of forfeits, which they were so obliging as to think I only took part in from complaisance, still increased this confidence. We were accordingly unobserved, and free as air. I often accompanied her in her visits to her friends, or those of her parents. We visited together the beautiful plains of Alsace, and of the neighbouring countries on both sides of the Rhine. What happiness I enjoyed! The weather was delightful, the country of the most diversified beauty, and I was with an affectionate mistress whose sensible and constant heart felt all the value of innocent pleasure! If she was much less than a wife to me, she was far more than a sister.

A sudden change of situation served to put our mutual affection to a kind of trial. The rector's wife and daughters were invited to spend a few days in town, with some rich and respected relations. This invitation could not be declined. I was known and esteemed by the family from whom it came, and had met them at the parsonage; I was accordingly included in the invitation: and it will readily be believed that I did

not require much pressing. This was a very new situation to persons accustomed to all the freedom and pleasures which families in easy circumstances are accustomed to in the country. The rector's wife, who, from an excellent education and uncommon equality of temper, was every where at home, felt not in the least embarrassed on the occasion. She was at her relations' house as at her own. From the easy manners, the calmness, the native dignity, which never left her, she might easily have passed for the mistress of the house. It was not thus with Olivia: she seemed out of her sphere from the very first day. From the visible restraint and uneasiness she was under, she might have been taken for an inhabitant of the waters that had left its native element. Accustomed to the activity and independence of rural life, she felt uncomfortable amidst the carpets, mirrors, and porcelains of an elegant apartment which she could not leave when she pleased, to conceal herself behind a tree agitated by the wind, to walk by the side of a limpid rivulet, or to run across meadows enamelled with thousands of flowers; and in the course of two days her ill-humour and impatience increased to such a height that she could scarcely disguise them. As to Frederica, her habits were also far from according with her temporary residence, nor was she very capable of accommodating herself to her new situation; but she unconsciously possessed the art of

making the situation bend to her. She was here, as in the country, the life of the company, and kept them in motion; a faculty valuable to indolent citizens, who dread *ennui* above all things. She invented games and amusements. The two sisters, in the midst of this social circle, were the only persons of their sex dressed in the German fashion. When Olivia compared her half rustic costume with the refined elegance of the French fashions before her eyes, she could not bear the idea of the comparison. In the country she would never have thought of it; in town her dress became insupportable to her. Frederica never compared herself to any one, and was as happy there as in any other place, in her customary apparel. Her behaviour towards me was as free as before. The only mark of preference she bestowed on me was that of addressing herself to me more frequently than to any other person, in order to communicate her remarks or wishes.

By virtue of that soft dominion she claimed over me, she one evening informed me that the ladies wished me to read to them. They had already heard me read at Sesenheim. I requested a few hours' attention, and read *Hamlet* to them with all the truth and warmth of expression in which youth is seldom deficient. I had the satisfaction to see Frederica affected. More than once she heaved profound sighs, and tears trickled down her rosy cheeks. This was

the only reward I had wished for. She heard with delight the praises she had procured and appeared proud of a success to which gloried in having contributed, by creating the opportunity. But it was now time for our amiable hostesses of the parsonage to regain their retreat, for Olivia scarcely retained any command of herself, although in her own rural home her good-nature was truly celestial. *Ennui* and disappointment had rendered her completely melancholy. Notwithstanding all the compassion I felt for her, I could not help praising her sister. I expressed to her how much pleasure it gave me to see her always the same, and as much at her ease in town as a bird in the air.

Whilst I was thus enjoying myself without reason or foresight, I almost forgot that I had come to Strasburg to take my degrees. At last I was obliged to recollect this circumstance, and to prepare to undergo an examination. I had promised both my father and myself to compose a dissertation on a question of law. I sought for a subject calculated to afford new and useful views. I soon perceived that I wanted erudition and time to enable me to treat on a matter of jurisprudence. I was therefore obliged to have recourse to some general thesis which I felt able to support. Of all branches of history I was best acquainted with that of the church. I had long taken the most lively interest in the conflict which has always arisen, and will ever exist,

between the church, or the established mode of public worship, and those to whom it relates. The church is, in fact, always opposed to the state, which it would fain rule; and to the citizens whom it would gladly subjugate on the other hand. The state refuses to acknowledge its supremacy, and individuals deny its right to govern them. The state protests on behalf of the public liberties; the good of the public is its object. The citizen defends his domestic liberty, that of his conscience and sentiments. From childhood I had witnessed all these contests, equally injurious to the church and state. My dawning reason had drawn the conclusion that the sovereign had a right to prescribe a mode of worship, to serve as a rule for the conduct as well as the instruction of the church; and to which the citizens were bound to pay external observance, and to render public homage; every one being, at the same time, at liberty to think as he pleased. I took for the text of my dissertation the former half of this subject; that is to say, the right, and even the duty, of the legislator to establish a public worship to which every one should be under the necessity of conforming. I supported my thesis partly on historical facts, and partly on reasoning. I showed how all positive religions, including the Christian religion itself, had been introduced by rulers of nations, kings, and powerful men. The example of protestantism also supported my thesis; which I main-

tained with extreme boldness, because I was in reality aiming only to please my father; and my most ardent wish and sincere hope was that my work might be rejected by the censors. Beh-  
risch had inspired me with an insurmountable aversion to the publicity of printing; and my conversations with Herder had destroyed all my confidence in myself, by shewing me but too clearly my own incompetence.

I was master of my subject, and I composed almost entirely from my own stores: I spoke and wrote Latin with facility. I therefore engaged in this undertaking with pleasure. My thesis might at least be maintained. My composition was not bad. I had it revised by a good latinist, who soon cleared it of all serious errors, and rendered my essay fit to be presented. I immediately sent my father a correct copy of it. He would have been better pleased had I written on a question of jurisprudence; but like a good protestant he approved of my boldness, and looked for good effects from the publication of this treatise.

I lost no time in laying it before the faculty, which, fortunately, behaved with equal politeness and discretion. The dean, an intelligent and judicious man, began by applauding my work, then passed on to the difficulties of the subject, enlarged on the objections to it, and concluded by stating, that it was impossible

to think of publishing such an essay as an academical dissertation. The candidate, he said, had given proofs of capacity, and evinced hopeful talents. Not to retard my promotion, they allowed me to sustain a thesis: I should afterwards meet with no difficulty in publishing my dissertation as an individual and a protestant. Scarcely could I conceal from the dean the pleasure his decision gave me. Every argument he alleged in order to soften his refusal, relieved me of a load of anxiety. Contrary to his expectations, I made no objection; I complimented him on his learning and prudence, and promised to guide myself wholly by his direction. I again set to work with my private tutor. The questions on which I was to maintain a thesis were fixed and printed. My fellow-students of our *table d'hôte* were appointed my adversaries; and I got through the disputation with equal facility and pleasure. I had long been assiduously studying the *Corpus Juris*, and I passed for a learned, clever fellow. According to custom, the solemnity concluded with a good dinner.

My father had been in hopes that my return to Frankfort would have been honourably celebrated by the publication of my treatise. The refusal to print it in the usual manner displeased him greatly. He wished to have it published at his own expense. I persuaded him that it ought first to be revised. With this intention



he preserved the manuscript, which I found amongst his papers many years afterwards.

My promotion took place on the 6th of August, 1771.\* The celebrated Schoëpflin died on the same day, at the age of seventy-five. This remarkable man had some influence over me, although I was not directly in communication with him. Men of his stamp may be compared to luminous stars, on which all eyes are fixed as long as they glitter above the horizon. Their presence encourages us, and we are excited by a noble emulation to imitate their great qualities. The bounty of nature had favoured Schoëpflin with a prepossessing exterior, with the gift of eloquence, and with eminent mental faculties. His fortune was the work of his natural and acquired talents. He was one of those privileged men who are endowed with the faculty of connecting the present with the past, and elucidating the interests of life by the torch of history. He was born in the country of Baden, and brought up at Bâle and Strasburg; thus he belonged wholly to the beautiful valley of the Rhine: all that earthly paradise was his country. Engaged in the study of history and antiquities, he seized all their phenomena with facility, and his memory never failed to recall them faithfully. Eager for instruction, he made rapid progress; and his success was uninterrupted. The literary

\* Goëthe was then twenty-two years of age.

world, and the world at large, loaded him with favours. His historical knowledge sufficed for every thing, and obtained him an agreeable reception wherever he went. He traversed Germany, Holland, France, and Italy. He maintained communications with all the celebrated literary men of his time. He rendered himself agreeable to the great; and if his eloquence ever gave umbrage to courtiers, it was only by occasionally prolonging an audience or a dinner. But he acquired the confidence of statesmen, for whom he composed learned memorials; and he found employment for his talents in all quarters. Several sovereigns wished to have attached him to themselves. He remained faithful to Strasburg and the court of Versailles. Even at that court they respected his German frankness, and protected him against the power of the pretor Klingling, his secret enemy. Delighting in society and conversation, he was at once devoted to study, to business, and to the world. It would have been difficult to conceive how he could find time for every thing, had not his known indifference towards women saved him all the days and hours which are so agreeably devoted to them by those who love them.

Still he is not included either amongst celebrated writers or great orators. His programmes, speeches, and harangues were always made for the occasion, the solemnity of the day; but his

great work on Alsace will go down to posterity. In that work he has revived the past, renewed the faded colouring of ancient pictures, restored shapeless statues, and inscriptions effaced by time or mutilated by accident. It was thus that he spread his character for industry through Alsace and the countries adjacent. He maintained to the last an undisputed ascendancy in Baden and the Palatinate. He founded the Academy of Sciences at Manheim, of which he remained president to the time of his death.

The only time I had occasion to approach this remarkable man, was one night when we gave him a serenade by torchlight. The court, planted with the lime-trees of the old building of the School of Law, was rather smoked than lighted by our flambeaux. When our concert, such as it was, ceased, Schoëpflin came down amongst us: the old man's venerable countenance expressed the satisfaction he felt, and he was quite at home in this youthful circle. He knew how to behave affably, and at the same time with dignity: he addressed us in a cheerful manner, without the least appearance of preparation or pedantry. His speech was affectionate and paternal; and we were enchanted to think he was treating us in the same manner as the kings and princes whom he had so often addressed. Our vociferous acclamations testified our joy: the trumpets and timbrels again sounded, and

the whole academic population departed to their own dwellings full of hope and happiness.

An intimacy already subsisted between two of Schoëpflin's disciples and me. I allude to Koch and Oberlin. I was passionately fond of the monuments and remains of antiquity. They induced me once more to study the Strasburg Museum, which was rich in documents illustrative of their master's great work on Alsace. I had learnt from this work to perceive vestiges of antiquity here and there, at the time of my first excursion into Alsace. Further researches enabled me, in my subsequent tours, to discover in the valley of the Rhine an ancient possession of the Romans, and to indulge in waking dreams amidst monuments of Roman greatness. Scarcely was I initiated into this science, when Oberlin turned my attention to the monuments of the middle ages, and taught me to distinguish the different ruins and documents which have transmitted their traces to our times. He soon inspired me with his own taste for our *minnesingers*,\* and our old heroic poets. I am under great obligations to this ingenious man, as well as to Mr. Koch. Had I listened to their advice, and yielded to their wishes, I might have owed to them the happiness of my life, as I shall presently shew.

\* The Troubadours of Germany.

Schoëpflin had passed an active life in the elevated sphere of public law. Deeply sensible of the influence in courts and cabinets, which this science and those analogous to it secure to a superior mind, he had an aversion equally obstinate and unjust for every profession founded on the science of the civil law, and he instilled this prejudice into his pupils. The two individuals above mentioned, friends of Salzmann, the president of our *table d'hôte*, evinced the most friendly disposition towards me. They set more value than I did on that impassioned vivacity with which I seized external objects, on the facility with which I depicted them, and exhibited their distinctive features so as to attach an interest to them. They had observed how little I studied civil law. My taste for the academic mode of life was no secret to them. They therefore saw no difficulty in attracting my attention to the study of history, public law, and eloquence, by proposing it to me, in the first instance as a kind of pastime, and by afterwards making it the principal occupation of my life. In this respect, Strasburg offered many advantages. The prospect of being employed in the German chancery at Versailles, and the example of Schoëpflin, were inducements. Although I did not, perhaps, think myself capable of equalling his merit, I could at least, I thought, improve my natural faculties sufficiently to jus-

tify the hope that I should not be the victim of a blind emulation. Such was the opinion of my two well-wishers, and of Salzmann. They all three considered my memory, and the facility with which I imbibed the spirit of a foreign language, as of great value: and they founded their views and proposals on these propitious qualities.

I have now to explain how it happened that all these schemes ended in nothing, and how I relinquished all prospects connected with France, and plunged again into Germany; and I shall take the liberty, as I have already done in similar cases, of prefixing a few reflections to this period of my history.

Few memoirs give an exact idea of all the proceedings of their heroes as they advance in life. In fact, this life, like the universe of which we form part, is an incomprehensible composition of liberty and necessity. Our will presages what we shall be inclined to do under all the circumstances in which we may be placed; but these circumstances govern us without our knowing it. We have the faculty of acting: but the *how* seldom depends on us; and as to the *why*, we know nothing of it.

The French language had pleased me from early youth. When I first became acquainted with it, my life was agitated and active; and this study had inspired me with new activity. I had

learnt French without grammar or rudiments, merely by conversation and exercise, and as a second mother-tongue. I had learnt to speak it with the greatest facility: and this had induced me to prefer Strasburg to any other place for my present university course. But, alas! it was precisely there that I was destined to find I must turn my views to a different quarter, and give up rather than cultivate the language and customs of France.

Politeness being considered by the French as one of the first of qualities, they are very indulgent towards strangers who endeavour to speak their language. They never laugh at the errors they perceive, and never notice them but with great civility. Still they cannot endure errors in language; and in order to apprise you of an incongruity of expression, they have a method of repeating what you have said, and giving another turn to it; thus politely leading you to remark the expression of which you ought to have made use, and by these means correcting those who are diligent and attentive enough to learn.

If a man will impose this task upon himself, and possess sufficient self-command to suffer himself to be schooled in this manner, he may certainly improve by it in some degree; but he is also liable to be discouraged, and to have his attention withdrawn from the subject of his discourse, by these perpetual interruptions: and of this I was peculiarly

sensible. As I always thought I had something interesting to say or to listen to, I did not like to be called to order on account of my expressions; yet this occurred to me oftener than to any one else, for my French was in general incorrect, and remarkable for a singular incongruity of style. I had learnt the expressions and accents of servants, soldiers, actors and frequenters of the theatre, as well as the language of the heroes and peasants of the drama: thus I had formed my French when I frequented the theatre at Frankfort. It was therefore no wonder that this language, truly worthy of the tower of Babel, and composed of so many different ingredients, exposed me to innumerable cacophonies; added to which, I had also frequented the French protestant church, being fond of hearing the sermons of the ministers who preached there. Nor was this all. When a boy, I had been much attached to our literature of the sixteenth century; and this study gave me a taste for the French writers of that famous period. Montaigne, Amyot, Rabelais, and Marot, became my favourite authors, and the objects of my admiration; and these various elements conflicting in my language rendered it a complete chaos. The attention of my auditors was fixed on the oddity of my expressions; and the most polite Frenchmen forgot their oratorical precautions in their eagerness to set me right. I was criticized without mercy, and sent



back to school. I was in the same predicament at Strasburg as I had been in at Leipsic, with this difference, that I could not now assert the right of each province to use its own idiom. I was now on foreign ground, and obliged to conform to the laws of the country.

My German fellow-students and I might, perhaps, nevertheless have yielded with a good grace, had not some evil genius whispered in our ears, that all the efforts of a foreigner to speak French well were unavailing. A practised ear can always distinguish a German, an Italian, or an Englishman under his French disguise: he is tolerated, but never admitted into the bosom of the church.

The exceptions quoted were far from numerous. We heard only of M. Grimm; for Schoëpflin himself had never attained perfection. He was applauded for having early felt the necessity of learning to express himself in French with perfect propriety. The zeal with which he had endeavoured to familiarize himself with the language of the country in which he had to reside, and to qualify himself to rank amongst French speakers and mix in the best French company, was approved; but the fashionable world, the connoisseurs, accused him of talking in dialogues and dissertations, instead of conversing. It was said that he himself was an instance of that rage for dissertation which was the original and deadly

sin of the Germans, whilst the talent of conversation was the most eminent quality of the French. Schoëpflin was no better treated as an orator. As soon as one of his most elaborate speeches was printed, the Jesuits, who detested him as a protestant, attacked him immediately, and eagerly exposed the bad French of the phrases he had introduced.

Thus, instead of being encouraged by the toleration of our inexperience, we were repelled by this pedantic injustice. We had no hopes of succeeding better than Schoëpflin, or of satisfying the extravagant attention of the French to external forms. We therefore adopted the resolution of relinquishing the French language entirely, and devoting ourselves with greater zeal and application than ever to our national tongue.

The society in which we lived furnished us with the opportunity of carrying our determination into effect, and encouraged us to adhere to it. Alsace had not been annexed to France long enough for its inhabitants of all ages to have lost that strong attachment to the German constitution, language, manners, and dress, which existed in every heart. A conquered people, whom necessity has deprived of half their national existence, would look upon the voluntary sacrifice of the remainder as a disgrace. They remain firmly attached to the ruins that remind them of the good old times, and cherish the hope of better

days. Many inhabitants of Strasburg formed a little circle by themselves, but internally united by an unanimous spirit, and continually increased and recruited by numbers of the subjects of the German princes, possessed of considerable estates in France, who all made a longer or shorter stay at Strasburg; the fathers to transact their business, and the sons to pursue their studies.

The German language predominated at our *table d'hôte*. Our president, Salzmann, was the only person amongst us who could express himself in French with much facility or elegance. Lersc might have passed for the model of a young inhabitant of our countries. Meyer of Lindau was much more like the former than a true Frenchman. As to the other members of our society, although several of them inclined to the French customs and language, they unanimously agreed with us.

If, after comparing the respective difficulties of the two languages, we proceeded to a comparison of the public institutions, we had certainly no great reason to praise the Germanic constitution; and we could not but acknowledge the abuses of our legislation; but we were proud of it when compared to the constitution of France, which country was hastening to ruin for want of laws to repress abuses. The little energy its government retained was wholly misapplied. The horizon was darkened by omens of an approaching tem-

pest, and a total overthrow was openly predicted.

If, on the contrary, we looked towards the North, the star of Frederic shone resplendent there: it was the polar star to us; its brilliancy illumined Germany and all Europe; nay, even the whole world. The preponderance of this great King was manifested on every occasion in the most striking manner. The Prussian exercise, and even the Prussian cane, had been introduced into the French army. Frederic's predilection for a foreign language was overlooked; indeed it was expiated by the vexations he endured from his favourite poets, philosophers, and men of letters, who looked upon him as an intruder, and treated him accordingly.

But what principally tended to render us dissatisfied with the French, was the uncivil and incessantly repeated assertion, that the Germans, even including this King, who was so anxious to attain the French polish in perfection, were totally devoid of taste. This conclusion terminated every opinion given by a Frenchman, like the burthen of a song. We endeavoured to treat this reproach with mere indifference; but how could we ascertain its justice or injustice; and how, in particular, could we look upon the French as competent judges of the matter, when we heard it cited as a decision of Menage, that the French

writers possessed all qualities with the exception of taste? Did we not also see in the works published at Paris that the writers of the day were accused of this deficiency, and that Voltaire himself did not escape this terrible charge? Accustomed as we were to listen only to the voice of nature, we were unwilling to acknowledge any rule but truth and freedom of sentiment, expressed in a lively and vigorous manner.

“Have not friendship, love, and fraternal affection, a natural expression of their own?”

Such was the war-cry or watchword of all the members of our little academic horde.

It may, probably, be conceived, that all the grounds of dislike which I have enumerated, might be traced to particular circumstances, and individual aversion; but I still think that French literature was distinguished at that period by peculiar characteristic features, which had rather a repulsive than attractive effect on young people full of life and activity. This literature had grown old, and was devoted to the great world; how then could it possibly win youthful hearts ardently panting for the felicities of life, and for liberty?

French literature had been constantly making progress since the sixteenth century, and no obstacle had interrupted its career. Political and religious troubles and foreign wars had but ac-

celerated its advance. Still it had been regarded by public opinion, for nearly a century, as having attained its highest degree of splendour. Now, supposing that favourable circumstances had suddenly ripened and got in an uncommonly rich harvest in the seventeenth century, the most eminent talents of the eighteenth must necessarily have contented themselves with humbly gleanings in the footsteps of their predecessors. But many branches of the literary tree were blighted. Comedy may be compared to a flower which requires the refreshment of incessant waterings. New manners and follies must perpetually supply it with sap, or it must languish and die. Those who had cultivated this delicate plant in France, with the greatest success, no longer existed. Many tragedies had likewise disappeared from the stage. Although Voltaire had not let slip the opportunity of publishing an edition of Corneille's works, in order to point out all the errors of his predecessor, he was universally considered unequal to that great master.

This same Voltaire, the wonder of his age, had also grown old, like the literature which he had vivified and governed for nearly a century. Around him still existed and vegetated a crowd of literary men, all more or less advanced in years, more or less active or successful, who were gradually disappearing. The ascendancy of society over writers constantly increased; so-

ciety, composed of persons of birth, rank, and fortune, sought its most agreeable recreations in literature; which, therefore, naturally became devoted to the taste of what is called good company. People of distinction and literary characters, by mutual action and reaction, exercised a reciprocal influence over each other. All that is distinguished is in its nature repulsive; literary criticism in France was, therefore, sharp and severe, its aim was to humble, to vilify, and destroy; and by this kind of criticism the upper classes kept down the writers, and the latter, with less decency, persecuted each other, and attacked even their own partisans. Thus, independently of the troubles in the church and state, such a literary fermentation was kept up, that Voltaire, although he was Voltaire, stood in need of all his extraordinary activity and superior talents to stem the torrent. He was already treated as an obstinate old fool; and his continual indefatigable efforts were styled the impotent attempts of extreme age. The principles he had constantly professed, and to the propagation of which he had devoted his life, no longer gained esteem or respect: he obtained no credit by his belief in God, or the profession of faith by which he continued to distinguish himself from the atheistical crowd. Thus was this patriarch of literature condemned, like the youngest of his fellow-labourers, to watch for a favourable mo-

ment, to exhaust himself in pursuit of new successes, to appear too lavish of favours to his friends, and of proofs of animosity towards his enemies ; in short, to violate truth whilst proclaiming his sovereign respect for her. To end, as he had begun, by dependence, was a poor return for his extraordinary and long continued exertions. His mind was too elevated, and his susceptibility too delicate to allow him to accommodate himself to such a situation ; and accordingly he was always kicking and struggling to disengage himself. He gave the reins to his caprices, and at a single bound overleaped the limits within which both his friends and enemies remained confined in spite of themselves ; for every one pretended to correct him, though no one could equal the strokes of his vigorous fancy.

In Germany we were naturally attached to the love of truth, as to a beacon that illuminates the path of life and science. To respect ourselves and to be just towards others, was our invariable rule. Hence we could not but remark, with increasing disapprobation, the want of good faith and the party spirit which Voltaire evinced, and his rage for attacking so many objects of respect. We accordingly grew more indifferent to him every day. For the sake of warring against priests, he had attacked religion and the sacred books, as if he could never vilify them



enough. These endeavours had disgusted me. I now saw him, in order to weaken the tradition of a deluge, denying the petrification of shells transported to a distance by the waters, and pretending that this was but a frolic of nature. From that moment I lost all confidence in him; for a single glance at a mountain sufficiently satisfied me that I stood on what had been the bed of a sea, now dried up, amidst the spoils of its primitive inhabitants. I felt certain that the floods had formerly covered these heights: and I cared little whether it had been before or during the deluge; I could not give up the idea that the valley of the Rhine had been an immense sea, and a beach of vast extent. This fact was, in my opinion, the basis of all progress in the science of the earth and of mountains.

Voltaire and French literature were, therefore, superannuated and devoted to worldly greatness. I have still a few observations to make on this extraordinary man. His constant industry, employed at once in literary works, in the world, and in politics; the desire of acquiring great riches by great means, and of keeping up such connexions with all earthly powers as would make him a power likewise—such were, in youth, the predominant qualities of Voltaire, the objects of his wishes and endeavours.

No man had ever appeared to sacrifice his independence with so much facility, in order to

render himself in reality independent. The nation flocked to his standard. In vain did his enemies oppose him with ordinary talents and extreme hatred; they could not prevent his success. He never succeeded, indeed, in reconciling himself with the court; but foreign kings became his tributaries. Catherine, Frederick the Great, Gustavus of Sweden, Christian of Denmark, Poniatowski the Pole, Henry of Prussia, and Charles of Brunswick, acknowledged themselves his vassals: even popes thought it necessary to endeavour to conciliate him by marks of respect. Joseph II. did himself no honour by his aversion to him; that emperor would have lost nothing by attending to so eminent a genius, listening to his noble inspirations, and thus enlightening his mind, and learning to set a higher value on extraordinary mental faculties.

The observations of which I have here given a hasty summary, were heard from all quarters at the period of which I am speaking: it was the cry of the day, perpetual and discordant, which afforded us neither knowledge nor information. The past was continually praised; something new and good was asked for, and when novelty presented itself, every one was immediately tired of it. Scarcely had a French patriot revived the national drama from its long lethargy by a piece adapted to touch every heart; scarcely had the Siege of Calais excited general enthusiasm, when

that piece and the other patriotic tragedies of the same author were condemned as insignificant. Destouches was accused of weakness in those pictures of manners which had so often delighted me in childhood; and even the very name of this meritorious man was forgotten. How many writers could I name on whose account I was reproached for judging like a true countryman, when I discovered any respect for them and their works, in conversing with Frenchmen respecting their modern literature.

This prospect continued to grow more and more unpleasant to my young countrymen and me. Our feelings and natural inclinations induced us to prize and retain received impressions, to dwell upon them a long time, and to preserve them as long as possible from being effaced. We were persuaded that constant and regular attention is the source of improvement in every science, and that perseverance and zeal will ultimately succeed in all things within the reach of the judgment. We were not, however, insensible of the advantages which high life and good company held out to youth in France. Rousseau had told us the truth in this respect; and yet, if we examined his life and considered his destiny, we saw him condemned to regard it as the best recompense of all his labours, that he was allowed to live unknown and forgotten at Paris.

When we heard of the encyclopedists, or happened to open a volume of their enormous work, we found ourselves in the situation of a man who, walking amidst the innumerable spindles and looms of a great manufactory, stunned with the noise and confusion of the machinery that dazzles the eyes and renders the brain giddy, on seeing the quantity of involved and incomprehensible apparatus, and contemplating all the ingredients and movements requisite for the manufacture of a piece of cloth—should feel himself, on a sudden, disgusted with the coat on his back.

We had reason to look upon Diderot as closely allied to Germany; for in all that the French censure in his works, he appears a true German; but his views were too elevated, the sphere of his ideas too extensive to admit of our attaching ourselves to him, and marching by his side. But his *Natural Son*, which he has contrived to elevate and ennoble with great oratorical art, pleased us highly; his brave poachers and smugglers filled us with enthusiasm. This rabble has since been but too prolific on the German Parnassus. Diderot was, as well as Rousseau, at the head of those who propagated a distaste for social life, and who calmly planned that stupendous shock which seemed ready to swallow up all existing institutions.

If we apply these considerations to the influ-

ence which these two celebrated men exercised over art, we shall perceive that they recalled and brought us back to nature.

The greatest effort of art is to produce the appearance of a grand reality by an illusion; but art fails of its object, when, by endeavouring to prolong this illusion, it presents us at last only with a common reality.

The theatre, as an ideal scene, had attained its object, by applying the rules of perspective to the disposition of the scenes. But it was wished to sacrifice this work of art, to close the sides of the scene, and thus to represent a real room. According to this disposition of the scene, the plays, the manner of acting, and every thing, in short, required changing, and a new theatre was to be formed.

The French comedians had reached the highest degree of art and truth in comedy. Their situation at Paris, the continual study of the manners of the court, the connexions of gallantry between the actors and actresses, and persons of high rank; all contributed to naturalize the perfect imitation of social life on the stage. In this respect the partisans of nature found little to criticise; but they thought they should effectually promote the progress of art, by choosing for the subject of their pieces the serious and tragical events which are frequently met with in ordinary life, using prose for the most elevated language, and thus

banishing from the stage the verse, declamation, and pantomime habitual to it, as unnatural.

It is very remarkable, and has not been sufficiently observed, that, at the same period, the old tragedy, so measured, so attached to its rhyme, so rich in the conceptions of the art, was threatened with a revolution, which was with difficulty averted by great talents and the influence of habit.

The celebrated Lekain represented the heroes of the French tragic scene with a dignity peculiar to himself. His acting was distinguished by ease, elevation, and dignity; but always removed to a certain distance from the reality of life. An antagonist named Aufresne suddenly appeared, and declared open war against all that deviated from nature; he aimed, in tragedy, at the most perfect truth of expression. This attempt was not in harmony with the state of the theatrical establishment of the Parisian theatre. He was the only one of his party; every one else sided with Lekain. Aufresne, firm in his resolution, left Paris without regret, and came to Strasburg. It was there that we saw him play the parts of Augustus in Cinna, Mithridates, and several others of the same kind, with as much dignity as nature and truth. He was a handsome man, of tall stature, but rather slender than stout. Although not very imposing, his manner shewed

nobleness and grace; his acting was calm and studied, without being cold; and he occasionally displayed considerable energy. He was allowed to be a very experienced artist, and one of the few who perfectly understood how to combine nature and art; but these are precisely the men whose art, being misinterpreted, always produces false applications.

It is here proper to notice a short, but very remarkable work, Rousseau's *Pygmalion*. Much might be said respecting this singular composition; it stands in some degree between nature and art; but in consequence of an erroneous conception, art gives way in it to nature. It exhibits an artist who has succeeded in producing a masterpiece; but who, not content with having realized the ideal in the marble, and given it a celestial life, must needs debase it for his own gratification, to this earthly existence. He thus destroys the most sublime production of genius and talent, by the most vulgar act of sensuality.

All these ideas, and many others, some correct and some ridiculous, some true, and others only half true, contributed to confuse our minds. Thus propensities and antipathies, which were almost unnoticed, were in all quarters preparing that revolution in German literature which we have since witnessed, and in which we have incessantly co-operated, knowingly or unknow-

ingly, with our warmest wishes or unintentionally.

Neither were we more inclined to pursue the French philosophy, which afforded us no promise of light or improvement. We thought we were ourselves sufficiently enlightened with respect to all points which concern religion. Accordingly, the relentless war of the French philosophers against the priesthood never disturbed our tranquillity. These books, prohibited and condemned to the flames, and making a great noise in the world, were to us almost insignificant. I will mention, for instance, the *System of Nature*, which we had the curiosity to read.\* It appeared to us so superannuated, so chimerical, and, if I may be allowed the expression, so cadaverous, that the very sight of

\* Voltaire refuted this book, in which atheism is erected into a system. "The author," he writes to D'Alembert, "has ruined philosophy in the minds of all magistrates and fathers, who know how dangerous atheism is to society." The King of Prussia also wrote a refutation of this work. "He," said Voltaire, "has taken the part of kings, who are no better treated than God in the *System of Nature*. As to me, I have only taken the part of mankind."

It is no wonder that Goëthe and his friends took little interest in the war which the philosophers waged against religious fanaticism. France presented the spectacle of the executions of Calas and Labarre. In Germany, and even Alsace, no one was persecuted. In France it was necessary to struggle for that tolerance, which in other countries existed undisputed.



it was painful to us; and we were almost afraid of it, as of a spectre.

The author seems to have thought he was annexing an excellent recommendation to his book, by declaring himself, in the preface, an old man detached from life, with one foot in the grave, desirous to tell the truth to his contemporaries and to posterity. These pretensions excited only laughter in us: we thought we had observed that old men are insensible to all that is good and lovely in the world. "The windows of old churches are black." "If you would know the taste of cherries and strawberries, ask children and birds." Such were our proverbs. The book in question really appeared to us the quintessence of old age—tasteless, and even revolting to taste. According to the author, every thing is necessary; whence he concludes that there is no God, as if the existence of God might not also be necessary! We readily admitted that we cannot escape the necessity of days and nights, of seasons, the influence of climate, physical circumstances, and the conditions of animal life; but we nevertheless felt in ourselves something which manifests itself as a free will; and something—reason, for instance—which endeavours to regulate this will. Were we to renounce the hope of incessantly improving our consciousness and understanding, of rendering ourselves constantly more in-

dependent of external objects and of ourselves? The word liberty sounds so agreeably to the ear and the heart, that we could never do without it, even if it only expressed an error.

Not one of us could read this book entirely through: we were too much disappointed in the hopes which had induced us to open it. The author professed to give us the System of Nature. We were in hopes of really receiving some instruction, with respect to this nature, our second divinity. Physics, chemistry, the description of the heavens and earth, natural history, anatomy, and many other sciences, had long fixed our attention on this universe, so vast, so richly adorned. We should have joyfully hailed any new observations on the sun and stars, the planets and worlds, on mountains, valleys, floods, and seas; on all that moves and exists in them. We were well aware that amongst all this would be found ideas which to common minds would appear hurtful, to the clergy dangerous, and to government intolerable; and we hoped that the work would not be deemed unworthy of the honours of the flames: but in what a mental void did we find ourselves plunged amidst the darkness of atheism, in which the author shrouds the world and all its creatures, the sky with all its stars! This magnificent creation was replaced by an eternally self-existing and self-moving matter, which

by means of this motion to the right and left, and in all directions, has, according to the author, produced the innumerable phenomena of existence. But why did he not, with this matter and motion, let us see him construct a little world?—this would have been a pretty strong argument in favour of his system. In fact, he knew no more of nature than we did; for after collecting a few general ideas, he suddenly abandons them in order to metamorphose into a material and heavy essence, self-moving indeed, but without direction or character, that which is more elevated than nature, or which manifests itself in nature as a being of a superior order; and he thinks he has gained a great advantage by this change.

But if this book did us any harm, it was by inspiring us with a cordial aversion for all philosophy, and particularly for metaphysics: an aversion which sent us back, with increased ardour and passion, into the sphere of poetry, and the studies which suit the activity and warmth of life.

Thus, although on the frontiers of France, we suddenly found ourselves wholly exempted from French influence. The modes of existence in that country appeared to us too determined, too much subjected to the influence of the great: the poetry of the French seemed cold, their criticism abusive, their philosophy at once abstruse

and insufficient. We should have remained firm in the intention of abandoning ourselves to nature, in all her wildness, had not another influence long previously disposed us to consider the world and its mental enjoyments from a most elevated and unconfined point of view, yet equally true and poetical. At first, this influence affected us only in secret, and we yielded to it gradually; but we soon gave ourselves up to it openly and without reserve.

Can it be necessary to add that I allude to Shakspeare? Does not this name alone render all further explanation needless? Shakspeare is better known in Germany than any where else; even better, perhaps, than in his own country. We render him all the justice, the homage he is entitled to; we extend to him the indulgence which we refuse each other. Men of the most eminent talents have made it their business to present all the qualities with which this great genius was endowed in the most favourable light; and I have always heartily subscribed to all that has been said in honour of him, and to every defence of his admirable talents. I have already described the impression which this extraordinary mind produced upon me, and the few remarks which I have hazarded on his works have been favourably received.

I shall, therefore, confine myself on this occasion to a more precise explanation of the manner in which

I became acquainted with Shakspeare. When I was at Leipsic, I read Dodd's collection, entitled *The Beauties of Shakspeare*. Notwithstanding all that may be said against collections of this kind, which only make an author known piece-meal, they produce, in my opinion, **very** good effects. Our understanding is not always strong enough to comprehend the whole value of an entire work; nor do we always know how to distinguish the passages which have an immediate relation to ourselves. Young people, in particular, whose minds are not sufficiently cultivated to possess much penetration, may be discouraged if they have to choose for themselves; and they have a greater relish for the brilliant extracts which are detached and laid before them. For my part, the perusal of the fragments I met with in the collection above mentioned is amongst my most agreeable recollections. Those noble strokes of originality, those fine sentiments, those excellent descriptions, those sallies of rich humour, so frequent in Shakspeare, had a powerful effect on me when presented in this insulated manner.

Wieland's translation of this author appeared soon after; and I devoured it. I made my friends and acquaintance read it. Germany had at an early period the advantage of good translations of many excellent foreign works. That of Shakspeare, published at first in prose

by Wieland, and afterwards by Eschenburg, was easy to understand, and soon became popular. It excited general enthusiasm. Metre and rhyme are undoubtedly excellent things; they are the primitive and essential characteristics of poetry. But what is more important and fundamental, what produces a stronger impression, what acts with greater efficacy on our minds in a poetical work, is what remains of the poet in a prose translation; for that alone is the real value of the stuff, in its purity and perfection. A dazzling ornament often makes us believe there is merit where none exists, and as frequently conceals its actual presence from our perception; accordingly, in my early studies, I preferred prose translations. Children, it may be observed, turn every thing into play: thus the echo of words and the cadence of verses amuse them, and they destroy all the interest of the finest work by the parody they make in reading it. I think a prose translation of Homer would be very useful, provided it were on a level with the progress of our literature. I submit these ideas to our able professors, and in support of them I will only refer to Luther's translation of the Bible. Although the different parts of the book are each in a peculiar style, and the tone varies successively from poetry to history, from command to instruction, this superior genius has given it in our language, at a single

cast, as it were ; and has thus rendered a greater service to religion than he could have done by endeavouring to transfer the character of the original into each separate part. Vain have been all subsequent efforts to give us in greater perfection the book of Job, the Psalms, and other Hebrew poems, by preserving their poetical form. The effect is to be produced on the multitude, for whom a simple interpretation will always be the best thing. These translations, which are the works of a refined taste, and strive to vie with the original, are only fit for amateurs of talent, whom they supply with a text for discussions which amuse them.

This popular kind of effect was produced on our German society at Strasburg by the immortal Shakspeare, whether translated or original, in fragments or entire. Thoroughly as men study the Holy Scriptures, did we familiarize ourselves with this great poet, and with the virtues and vices of his times which he describes so admirably. We amused ourselves with the mimic imitation of his characters. His proverbial expressions and flashes of comic humour excited our mirth. I was the first to comprehend his genius with the liveliest enthusiasm ; and my friends caught the contagion which lifted me above myself. We were not ignorant that it was possible to dive deeper into every part of the British poet's excellence, and to

appreciate it more judiciously than we did ; but we deferred the study to a future period. All we wished for at the time was to enjoy him at our ease, and yield ourselves up to the fascination of a free imitation ; we could not bear to scrutinize the talents of the man who afforded us so much pleasure, or to look for his defects. We took pleasure in greeting him with unbounded admiration. A correct idea of our notions on this subject may be formed by consulting Herder's Essay on Shakspeare, inserted in his Dissertation on Art in Germany ; as well as Lenzen's Remarks on the Theatre, in which he has introduced a translation of Love's Labours Lost. Herder has fully entered into the merits of Shakspeare, of which he conveys the idea with admirable precision.

Eager to avail ourselves of the time we had to pass in this fine country, we did not lay aside our custom of making occasional excursions in it. In the cloisters of the Abbey of Molsheim we admired some windows which were very finely painted. We heard burlesque hymns to Ceres sung in the fertile country between Colmar and Schelestadt. At Ensisheim we were shown enormous *aërolites* preserved in the church. The fashionable Pyrrhonism of the age led us to ridicule a superstitious credulity, little suspecting that the day would come when these singular productions of the air would fall in our fields,



or at least be preserved as great curiosities in our cabinets.

I shall always remember with pleasure a pilgrimage to the Ottilienberg (Saint Ottilia's Mount) which we made in company with about a thousand of the faithful. There, amidst the ruins of a fort built by the Romans, the youthful Ottilia, daughter of a count, had been induced by piety to choose herself a retreat in a rocky cave. Near the chapel in which the pilgrims pay their devotions, is shewn the spring at which she quenched her thirst; and many interesting anecdotes of this pious maiden are related. Her name and the portrait I formed of her in my own mind remained deeply impressed. After long meditating upon it, I at length bestowed this name on one of my beloved daughters, whose pure and religious hearts have secured them a favourable reception in the world.\*

From this eminence there is an extensive prospect of the grand scenery of Alsace; which, although so well known to us, always seemed to display new charms. Wherever we are placed in an amphitheatre, the sight comprehends the whole audience, but we distinguish none but our neighbours with perfect clearness. It was thus that we viewed the thickets, rocks, hills, forests, fields, meadows, and villages, which we

\* The heroine of one of Goëthe's romances entitled "*Elective Affinities*."

perceived in the foreground or at a remote distance. Bâle was pointed out to us in the horizon. I would not affirm that we saw it; but we felt a lively pleasure in perceiving afar off the azure mountains of Switzerland. We ardently longed to visit them, and the impediments which prevented the accomplishment of our wishes left a painful impression on our minds.

I abandoned myself with a sort of intoxication to all these diversions and pleasures, in order to free myself from the passion I had conceived for Frederica. My reflections on this subject had been followed at length by anxiety and sorrow. A youthful passion which is conceived and entertained without any fixed object, may be compared to a shell thrown from a mortar by night: it rises calmly in a brilliant track, and seems to mix, and even to dwell for a moment with the stars; but at length it falls and bursts, and its most terrible effects are produced at the spot where its course terminates. Frederica and I had yielded, inconsiderately, to the charms of mutual tenderness; but I was about to be obliged to quit Strasburg, without being able to form any plan for the future, and with every probability that it would be a long time before I should be in a situation to do so. At my age, dependent as I was upon a father, whose consent I durst not even think of asking,—ignorant and unable even to guess what situation I should one day hold in

society; devoted to poetry and letters, and averse to all other occupations,—how could I entertain the hope of being united to the object of my affection? Could I condemn Frederica to see her fate depend on a hope so remote and so uncertain? These reflections came, indeed, very late; but how was I to escape the inflexible yoke of necessity? Frederica herself was still the same: she appeared unwilling to believe that our pleasing intimacy was so soon to have an end. Olivia, on the contrary, who saw with pain that I was about to leave them, but who was not, like her sister, going to lose a lover, had either more foresight or more frankness. She frequently talked to me of the probability of my departure, and endeavoured to console herself both on her own account and her sister's. A young woman who renounces a man for whom she has acknowledged an inclination, is not, perhaps, in so critical a situation as a young man, who, after having made a declaration, is under the necessity of withdrawing. He always has a melancholy part to perform; for he is expected to act in the same manner as a man of riper age, and to have well considered his situation. If he displays a marked levity of character, what excuse can be made for him? The motives of a young female who breaks off such a connexion always appear good; those of a man, never. But all my reflections were insufficient to prevent my continuing to indulge in an

habitual intimacy which had become so dear to me. There was now something painful to me in Frederica's presence; but I found infinite pleasure in thinking of her and conversing with her in her absence. I seldom went to see her; but that circumstance increased the activity of our correspondence. She knew how to represent her situation with a calm serenity, and to express her sentiments to me in an affecting manner. I reflected on her virtues with the enthusiasm of friendship, and the ardour of passion. Absence disengaged me from every idea unconnected with my love, and distant conversation restored the original vivacity and warmth of my passion. At those moments I used to form in my mind a complete illusion respecting the future; and yet every thing was abruptly tending to a catastrophe, as always happens on an approaching parting.

Notwithstanding the anxiety and extreme affliction I felt, I could not withstand the desire of seeing Frederica once more: it was a cruel day to us, and its circumstances will never be effaced from my memory. When I had mounted my horse and offered my hand for the last time, I saw tears swimming in her eyes, and my heart suffered as much as hers. I proceeded along a path that leads to Drusenheim, when a strange vision, which must have been a presentiment, suddenly disturbed my mind. I thought I saw my own image advancing towards me on horse-

back in the same road. The figure wore a grey coat with gold lace, such as I had never worn. I awoke from this dream, and the vision disappeared. It is singular enough that eight years after, as I was going to see Frederica once more, I found myself in the same road, dressed as I had dreamed, and wearing such a coat, accidentally and without having chosen it. I leave every one to judge of this matter as they please; but this singular illusion diverted my thoughts for a time from the grief of parting; I felt my regret at quitting this fine country, and all that was lovely and beloved in it, gradually softened. I roused myself at length from the extreme affliction in which this farewell-day had plunged me, and I pursued my journey with greater serenity.

On reaching Manheim, I hastened with eager curiosity to the celebrated gallery of antiques. Whilst I was reading Winkelmann and Lessing on the arts, at Leipsic, I had continually heard talk of these *chefs-d'œuvre*, but had not seen them. We had nothing but academical studies of the Laocoon and a few others. All that Oöser told us respecting these monuments was nearly an enigma to us; for how can an idea of perfection be imparted to mere beginners?

The director Verschapel received me in a friendly manner. One of his people conducted me into the hall, where he left me entirely to my taste for art and my own observations. The

most magnificent statues of antiquity adorned the walls and filled the interior. I walked about amidst a forest of living marble, surrounded by a population of ideal beauty. By drawing or closing the curtains, each of these fine figures was shewn in its most favourable light. They were moveable on their pedestals, and could be turned about at pleasure.

I gave myself up, for some time, to the first impression—the irresistible effect of the whole. I afterwards stopped to examine separately such of these masterpieces as most attracted my admiration: and who will deny that the Apollo Belvedere, by his half-colossal size, the elegance of his form, his noble attitude, the ease of his gesture, and his victorious look, triumphs over all his rivals and over ourselves? After having contemplated him, I turned towards Laocoon, whom I now saw for the first time grouped with his sons. I endeavoured to recollect every thing remarkable that I had heard respecting this fine group and the discussions to which it has given rise, but my attention was frequently withdrawn from it by other *chefs-d'œuvre*. The dying Gladiator long absorbed my attention. I was enchanted with the group of Castor and Pollux, that valuable though problematical relic of antiquity. In vain I endeavoured to analyze the effects of this delicious contemplation on my mind; but although I could not force myself to reflection, nor

infuse much clearness into my ideas, I began to feel it possible to comprehend the character and peculiar beauties of all the objects in this vast collection, by examining each of them separately.

It was the Laocoon that I observed with the greatest attention. It has often been asked why he is not represented as crying out: but this celebrated question appeared to me decided, when I remarked that he could not cry out. In fact, the whole energetic and artist-like conception of the attitude of the principal personage in this fine group results from two circumstances: the endeavours he makes to disengage himself from the serpent, and his efforts against its bite. In order to diminish the pain, the abdomen is contracted, and hence it is impossible to cry out. I communicated these remarks to Oëser in a letter: he did not seem to think highly of my explanations, and merely encouraged my goodwill. Fortunately, I have long matured these ideas; they have been confirmed by new observations, and I have explained them in my collection of the Propylæa.

To the pleasure of contemplating so many sublime works of art, was added a foretaste of the beauties of antique architecture. I found the cast of a capital of the Pantheon; and I must confess that, at the first sight of these elegant and magnificent leaves of acanthus, my faith in the

sublimity of the architecture of the North began to waver a little.

The contemplation of these grand monuments has had a great influence on my whole life : yet it produced, at the time, no remarkable effect upon me ; for scarcely were the doors of this splendid hall closed after me, than I tried to shake off the impression I had received. I felt fatigued with the examination of all these figures, and endeavoured to divert my thoughts from them. I was not again drawn into this attractive sphere until after I had made a long circuit. Still the fruits which such impressions bear in silence, when they are received as pleasures and without being analyzed, are of inestimable value. It is a most fortunate thing for the young, when they can defend themselves from the spirit of criticism, and yield up their minds to the impression of the beautiful and excellent, without troubling themselves to discover and separate the accompanying dross.



## CHAPTER XII.

I RETURNED to my native town this time with a better state of health, and a mind better disposed than I had brought with me on my first return; but my enthusiastic notions, and the multiplicity of tastes, passions, and studies that divided my attention, could not fail to disagree with the spirit of order and perseverance which distinguished my father. My excellent mother was fully employed in maintaining harmony between us, by throwing a friendly veil over the eccentricities into which my imagination betrayed me. At the same time my father was not dissatisfied with my efforts to please him. I had taken my degrees, which was one step towards the situation in life he intended me to fill. He was very anxious about my dissertation on the respective rights of the Church and State, and entertained hopes of eventually overcoming my aversion to having it printed.

Of the odd whims by which I tormented my mother, the idea of bringing home with me a young musician, whom I had heard play on the

harp, when I passed through Mentz, may serve as a specimen. I had been pleased with his dawning talent, and thought it perfectly natural to take him under my protection. I have always been fond of seeing young people attach themselves to me and take me for their patron; nor have all the unfortunate trials I have made entirely cured me of this inclination. My mother very justly conceived that Mr. Goëthe would not be pleased to see me introduce a wandering musician into one of the most respectable houses in the city, with as little ceremony as I might have taken him into an inn. She therefore had the kindness to get a lodging taken for my protégé. I recommended him to my friends, who interested themselves in his behalf. I met him a few years afterwards; but I did not perceive that his musical talents, which at first excited my enthusiasm, had materially improved.

I now found myself once more in the midst of the amiable circle that surrounded my sister, and of which she seemed to be the queen, although she had no ambition to reign. Her empire over her friends was that of an amiable and intelligent young woman, who is a kind confidant, and not likely to become a rival. This friendly circle was fond of hearing me read, tell stories, or explain my literary projects. They encouraged me to execute my plans, and chid me when I seemed to lay them aside.

Of all the friends who visited at our house I was most intimately connected with the two Schlossers. Jerome Schlosser was a very learned advocate, who used to find an agreeable recreation in the study of ancient literature. He also amused himself with the composition of Latin poetry, which we often enjoyed much pleasure in hearing him read or recite. Had I followed his advice he would have made me an able lawyer. His brother John George, with whom I was still more intimate, had returned from Treptow, having quitted prince Louis of Wurtemberg. He had acquired a knowledge of the world and its business, nor was his improvement in national and foreign literature less conspicuous. He was still attached to the practice of composing in several languages, but his example no longer excited emulation in me. I had devoted myself wholly to our national idiom, and I now cultivated those of other countries only to qualify myself to read their best authors in the original. The uprightness and knowledge of the world, which distinguished John Schlosser, rendered him almost obstinate in his attachment to his opinions, which were founded on the most ardent zeal for the good of society.

These two friends soon introduced me to Merk, to whom I had been favourably mentioned by Herder on his return from Strasburg. Merk, a singular character, who has greatly in-

fluenced me, was a native of Darmstadt. I never heard how he obtained his education : all I know is, that after having completed his studies, he went into Switzerland as tutor to a young gentleman, and remained a long time in that country, whence he returned married. When I first knew him he was paymaster of the forces at Darmstadt. To much natural intelligence and wit he had added considerable attainments, particularly in modern literature ; the history of all nations was familiar to him. His capacity in business, and his abilities in the exercise of his functions, secured him universal esteem. He was received in all company, being a most agreeable companion to those who had not learnt to dread his cutting sarcasms. His long, thin face exhibited a pointed and far projecting nose ; in his eyes of light blue, approaching to grey, in his restless but observing looks, there was something of the physiognomy of the tiger. Lavater has preserved his profile in his works. His character was a compound of eccentric contrasts ; he was naturally kind, confiding, and noble in sentiment, but had grown angry with the world ; and this atrabilarious humour fermenting in his head, often inspired him with an invincible inclination to malice and even to deliberate mischief. At certain moments he was calm, kind, and reasonable ; at others he sought only to wound the feelings of those about him. The

Latin proverb, *Fœnum habet in cornu*, might have been applied to him. But we readily approach a danger from which we think ourselves protected. I was, accordingly, very fond of his company, and extremely desirous of benefiting by his good qualities, in the persuasion that he would never direct his evil genius against me. Whilst this moral restlessness of his, this rage for tormenting others, thus drew their hatred upon him, and prevented his enjoying the pleasures of society, another species of restlessness in which he delighted was equally hostile to his tranquillity of mind. He was afflicted with a kind of scribblomania, to which he was easily induced to give way, since he wrote with great facility both in prose and verse, and was thus entitled to figure amongst the *beaux-esprits* of his time. I still possess epistles in verse from him, distinguished by original views respecting persons and events, but written with such offensive energy that they cannot be published at present. They must either be suppressed or reserved for posterity, as proofs but too convincing of the secret discords of our literature. This disposition to vilify and destroy rendered him, however, dissatisfied with himself, and he envied me the innocent pleasure I enjoyed in painting all that presented itself to my imagination in agreeable colours.

His literary inclinations, however, often gave

way to the irresistible bent which urged him towards commerce and the mechanical arts. When he had once begun to curse his poetical talents, or when his fancy no longer satisfied his demands, he laid aside his pen and poetry, rushed into some enterprize in commerce or manufactures, and consoled himself by getting money.

In the mean time my Faust was proceeding. I was composing, by degrees, Goëtz Von Berlischingen in my head. The study of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries still possessed attractions for me. The imposing monument of the Minster had left a deep impression on my mind, and in some degree formed the back-ground of the picture on which I was engaged.

I threw together all my ideas respecting this kind of architecture, which I wished to have called German and not Gothic. In the first place I maintained that it was national and not foreign. I next asserted that no comparison could be made between this species of architecture and that of Greece and Rome, because the principle, the parent idea of the two arts, was not the same. Ancient art, born in a more favourable climate, might rest the roofs of buildings upon columns, and leave the contours of temples almost entirely opened to the air by numerous apertures. But the principal object of modern art is to shelter us against the inclemency of the weather. It was therefore necessary to surround us with thick

walls on every side. Let us honour the genius which first discovered the means of varying the aspect of these enormous walls, to let in the light through elegant ogives, to cut out their edges, as it were, with extreme delicacy, and to occupy both the eye and the thoughts in the contemplation of vast surfaces and imposing masses. The towers and spires which shoot up into the air possess a merit analogous to that of the edifices they surmount; and although they do not, like cupolas, represent the sky in the inside of the temple itself, their external height proclaims to the surrounding country the existence of the holy monument which lies at their base.

I also devoted part of my time to a more profound study of the sacred books. I was induced to engage in this course of reading by the perusal of the life of Luther, whose enterprizes made so distinguished a figure in the sixteenth century. My vanity was flattered by this occupation of searching in the collection of the sacred books for the traces of their slow and successive production; for I was persuaded, contrary to the general opinion, and to that of my friends, that they had been revised at different periods. I also took a peculiar view of the contradictions we meet with in the Scriptures. People generally endeavour to remove them by taking the most important and clearest passages as a rule, and harmonizing with them such as seem contradictory

or less easily understood. I, on the contrary, sought to distinguish those parts which best expressed the general sense of the book, and rejected the rest as apocryphal.

I was already attached to the method I am about to explain, as the basis of my belief. Traditions, and especially written traditions, are the foundation of the Bible. These determine its spirit, sense, and intention; and it is there that we must look for all that is primitive, divine, influential on our destiny, and invulnerable in the sacred Scriptures. No external action or consideration can alter the primitive essence of the work, any more than a bodily disorder can affect a strong mind. As to the language, dialect, mode of expression, style, in short to the writing, considered as a work of the mind, all these outward forms have undoubtedly a very intimate connexion with the essence of the work, but they are exposed to alterations and injuries of a thousand kinds. In fact, the nature of things does not admit of transmitting a tradition in perfect purity. The insufficiency and imperfection of him who must necessarily be its organ, preclude this possibility. Even supposing that the relation of facts remained unaltered, it must in time cease to be perfectly intelligible: and in this sense it may be truly affirmed that no translation faithfully represents the original it professes to make us acquainted with, on account of the dif-



ference of times, places, and above all, of the faculties and opinions of men.

If we yield to the critics a few external forms which have no influence on our souls, and which may give rise to doubts; if they accordingly decompose the work and pull it to pieces, they will not be able to destroy its essential character, to annihilate the immense perspective of the future which it presents, to shake a confidence firmly established, or to deprive us, in short, of the principal foundations of our faith. It is this belief, the fruit of deep meditation, which has served as the guide of my moral and literary life: I have found it a capital safely invested and richly productive in interest, although I have sometimes made but a bad use of it. It was this manner of considering the Bible that opened to me the knowledge of it. The religious education which is given to protestants had led me to read it through several times. I had been delighted with the wild but natural style of the Old Testament, and the ingenuous sensibility that pervades the New. Hitherto, indeed, the whole had not entirely satisfied me; but the variety of characters that distinguishes its different parts now no longer led me into error. I had learnt to enter into the true spirit of the work; and my attachment to it, founded on deep study, blunted all the arrows of mockery, of which I clearly perceived the bad faith. With-

out detesting those who ridiculed religion, I was sometimes quite enraged at their attacks; and I remember that after reading Voltaire's *Saul*, the fanatical zeal with which I felt myself transported, would have tempted me to strangle the author if I had had him near me. On the other hand, I was pleased with all researches made with a view to a fair examination. I hailed with joy the efforts made to improve our acquaintance with the customs, manners, and countries of the East, and I continued to exercise all my sagacity in the endeavour to gain a thorough knowledge of these venerable traditions of antiquity.

The reader may possibly recollect the manner in which I had endeavoured, in childhood, to sanctify myself, in imitation of those patriarchs represented to us in the first book of *Moses*. Wishing, at the period I am now speaking of, to proceed regularly and step by step, I took the second book, but as far removed as I now was from the plenitude of life that animated my infancy, so far distant did this second book appear to me from the first. A few significant words in it sufficiently demonstrate the total oblivion of the times elapsed. "Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph," says the author. Although I did not feel the same pleasure as when I read the book of the Patriarchs, I nevertheless applied myself with incredible industry to the reading of the whole Pentateuch; and

formed to myself singular systems, which it is unnecessary to introduce here, respecting the commandments given by God himself, the residence of the Israelites in the wilderness, and the character of Moses.

Nor did the New Testament escape my researches. I exercised my critical powers on its various texts, but full of attachment to this sacred Book I heartily repeated the salutary saying: "Of what importance are contradictions between the Evangelists, if the Gospel does not contradict itself."

I also endeavoured, but without much success, to penetrate into one of the principal dogmas of Lutheranism, which our modern Lutherans have considerably extended—the predominant inclination of man to sin. I made myself familiar with the jargon appropriate to this dogma, and made use of it in a little work I published under the title of "A Letter from an Ecclesiastic to a New Brother." The principle of this essay was tolerance, the watchword of the time, the cry of all the well-disposed.

In order to sound the public, I had several essays of this kind printed at my own expense the following year. I gave copies to my friends, and delivered the rest to a bookseller, to dispose of as well as he could. Some of the papers noticed it favourably, and others with severity. It excited, however, but little attention. I have

still a copy of the collection, thanks to the care with which my father preserved it ; and I propose to add it to my works, with a few inedited essays of the same kind, in a new edition.

We kept up a spirited literary intercourse with Herder, in which there was nothing wanting but a little more amenity. But his habit of railing and snarling remained unaltered. Swift was Herder's favourite writer ; and we gave him, amongst ourselves, the nickname of *the Dean*, which gave rise to several mistakes and some anger on his part.

It was nevertheless with great pleasure that we heard of his being summoned to Buckeburg. Count de la Lippe, his new patron, was equally famed for talents and bravery, although said to be a singular character. It was in his service that Thomas Abbt had become celebrated. The premature death of that meritorious writer was much regretted ; whilst all applauded the attention of his protector in raising a monument to his memory, and in appointing such a man as Herder to succeed him.

The period of his nomination rendered it still more honourable. It was at that time that the German princes were solicitous to surround themselves not only with men remarkable for their science and fitness for public business, but with those who were distinguished by great literary talents. The margrave Charles of Baden,

full of zeal for every thing noble and useful to mankind, had sent for Klopstock, not so much for the sake of confiding a public employment to him, as to embellish his court by the presence of this eminent genius. All the productions of this poet's pen met with our eager admiration and homage. Whenever an ode or elegy of Klopstock's could be procured, copies were speedily taken. When the princess Caroline of Hesse-Darmstadt had a collection of them made, of which a very small number of copies was printed, we esteemed ourselves happy in procuring one, by means of which we completed our manuscript collections.

Klopstock had acquired a degree of respect by his character and conduct, which was shared by other persons of superior talents. The book trade in Germany had hitherto depended solely on works of utility, scientific books, for which the authors received only moderate gratuities; but poetical productions excited a sort of religious respect; and it would have been thought almost an act of simony to offer them to the best bidder, or to accept any profit from them. The relation between poets and their publishers, was that of patron and client. The former, to whom public opinion ascribed a most elevated rank in the moral system, on account of their talents, were considered as beings superior to every kind of material interest, and glory was

the only recompense that was deemed worthy of their labours. The liberality of rich booksellers nevertheless administered to the poverty of the poets; and the balance was in some degree restored by a pretty frequent exchange of mutual generosity, between munificent patrons and grateful clients. Gottsched continued to reside with Breitkopf, till the death of the former. The sordid avarice of booksellers, and the rapacity of piratical publishers, were then unknown evils.

There was, however, a general stir amongst the German authors. They compared the mediocrity of their fortunes, and the poverty of some of them, to the wealth of the booksellers; and there was not one of them who did not feel the most anxious desire to secure a more independent and certain income.

It was at this period that Klopstock proposed a subscription for his Republic of Letters. The price he fixed was a louis-d'or. This slight tribute was considered as much in the light of an offering to genius as of the true value of the work. Many persons, zealous in the cause of literature, and amongst them individuals of high distinction, were the first to lay down the amount of the subscription. Every one was eager to join in it; people of both sexes and of all classes wished to contribute to this pious work. Many boys and girls devoted their savings to

this object ; the general expectation was excited to the highest degree ; the most perfect confidence was reposed in the author.

The effect of the appearance of the work was very singular. Notwithstanding its real merit, it did not fulfil the public expectation. Klopstock's opinions on poetry and literature, declared in an oracular manner, were clothed in the druidical forms of ancient Germany. His maxims on true and false taste were expressed in laconic sayings and sentences. The utility the lessons afforded had been sacrificed to the singularity of the forms which the author had adopted. This book was, indeed, a treasure to authors and scholars. Men accustomed to thinking could follow its profound thoughts with pleasure ; all who knew how to find out and appreciate the beautiful, might discover it by the light of the torch which the author held out to them. But to amateurs and persons of superficial education, his work, in which he had been expected to descend to the level of every class of the public, was a sealed book. The disappointment was therefore universal : yet such was the veneration in which the author was held, that scarcely a murmur was heard on the subject. The young people of fashion consoled themselves for the failure of their expectations, by making each other presents of the copies for which they had paid so dearly. I

myself received several from young ladies of our acquaintance. This attempt, advantageous to the author but not very favourable to the public, rendered subscriptions unpopular, particularly those which were to be paid in advance. There were, nevertheless, too many persons interested in the success of this manner of publishing, to allow of its relinquishment upon a single trial. Dessau's printing-office offered itself as an intermediary between authors and the public. Men of letters and publishers formed a company, the members of which were to divide the expected profits in certain proportions. The want of such a resource had been so deeply felt, that this undertaking met with great approbation at first. But this encouragement did not last; and, after several attempts, the losses which the society suffered produced its dissolution.

The most active communications were now established amongst the friends of literature. The journals and literary almanacs were open to poets and writers of all descriptions. I was ardently industrious in writing, but at the same time indifferent to all I produced when once finished. My paternal affection for the progeny of my brain awoke only, when I was engaged with my productions amidst a circle of friends. Many persons interested themselves in my labours, whatever were their importance and



extent, because I took great interest in the works of others. Whoever was capable of writing, and disposed to attempt it, was sure to meet with encouragement from me. I spurred them on and urged them to compose, and to abandon themselves, independently, to their own inspirations. They acted in the same manner towards me. This emulation, although carried to excess, was favourable to originality of talent, and gave every one a highly agreeable importance in his own eyes. In this continual movement of our minds, all that was produced was the fruit of a spontaneous impulse. No one sought the light of any theory whatever. These youths had no other guide than the suggestions of their own tastes and tempers. Such was the origin of the character of that celebrated period of our literature, decried by some and eulogized by others, in which the judicious employment of the faculties of the mind produced the happiest results, whilst their abuse was naturally followed by bad effects. The picture of this literary revolution and its various movements is the principal object of this book. On the whole, it was highly remarkable on account of the numbers of young men of talent who now took wing, and who, as usually happens, relying with the utmost confidence on their own abilities, evinced a presumption equal to their ardour.

Such was my situation, as far as concerns studies and occupations: but in youth we can discover no interest even in the objects best calculated to excite it, unless we are animated by love; unless the heart is touched by that vivifying sentiment. It was the privation of this sacred flame that I had to lament. My sorrows, however, rendered me more mild and indulgent; and society became more agreeable to me than at that brilliant period, when my life was so completely occupied, and when I was starting freely in its career, without having any fault to reproach myself with.

I had taken my leave of Frederica in writing. Her answer cut me to the heart. It was still that beloved hand, that beautiful writing, those same sentiments which had made me think her formed for me. She now, for the first time, made me sensible of the extent of my loss, and the impossibility of my repairing or even mitigating it. I thought of all her virtues, all her charms, and the sense of my own loss plunged me in the deepest affliction, embittered by the consciousness that I owed it entirely to my own imprudence. Margaret had been torn from me; Annette had withdrawn her affection; but in this case I myself was guilty. My blind passion had inflicted a deep wound on the most lovely of minds; and the anguish I felt at renouncing an attachment which had made me so

happy, was increased by that of insupportable remorse. In order to atone for my offences as far as lay in my power, I sincerely interested myself in the feelings of those who had loved as I had ; I studied how to extricate them from difficulties ; how to prevent misunderstandings, and to avert from others the misfortunes I had suffered myself. These pursuits procured me the title of the Confidant, as my roving excursions in the country had gained me that of the Traveller. Nothing but the sight of sky, mountains, vales, fields, and forests, could restore me to any degree of tranquillity. The situation of Frankfort, between Darmstadt and Homburg, and the pleasantness of those two cities, which had become more intimately connected through the relationship of their sovereigns, were favourable to my tours. I accustomed myself to live as it were on the road, going and returning like a messenger, from the plain to the mountain, and from the mountain to the plain. I walked about Frankfort, either alone or in company, often taking my meals in some eating-house, that I might afterwards continue to wander at my ease, more eager than ever for nature and liberty. In these wanderings I composed hymns and dithyrambics of a singular kind. One of these pieces has been preserved under the title of the *Song of the Traveller in the Storm*. It was

composed extempore in a kind of transport, in the midst of a storm that overtook me on the road. At length my heart felt a complete void. In order to escape danger, I avoided all intimacy with persons of the other sex ; but a lovely and affectionate being was attached to me, although she never allowed me to know her sentiments. A woman equally beautiful and amiable cherished a secret passion, which I, who was the object of it, never discovered. My ignorance in this respect only rendered her company more agreeable to me. Always easy and happy in her society, I paid her unreserved and affectionate attentions. It was not until long afterwards, and even when she had ceased to exist, that I learned the secret of this celestial love, in a manner which surprised and grieved me exceedingly. But I was innocent this time ; I could give tears equally pure and sincere to her memory ; particularly as my heart was entirely at liberty when this mystery was revealed to me, and I enjoyed the happiness of living for myself and my literary inclinations.

During the excess of my affliction for the loss of Frederica, I had recourse, according to my usual custom, to the consolations of poetry. I wished to merit absolution from my conscience. I continued my poetical confessions. The two Maries in Goëtz von Berlischingen and Clavijo,

and the pitiable figure which their two lovers make in those pieces, are doubtless the results of my bitter reflections and repentance.

The continual exercise I took, whilst it re-established my health, revived the faculties of my mind, and restored tranquillity to my bosom. Pedestrian excursions appeared to me too fatiguing and too melancholy. I resumed the exercise of riding; and at the approach of winter my young companions and I adopted that of skating, which I had never tried. I now practised it sufficiently to enable me to make long excursions on the ice.

We were indebted to Klopstock for our taste for this equally amusing and salutary exercise. We knew that he was passionately addicted to it, as his odes assured us. One morning, when a fine frost promised us good sport, I exclaimed with him, as I sprung out of bed :

“ Animated by the joyful vivacity which  
“ arises from the consciousness of health, I have  
“ already glided far over this brilliant crystal  
“ that covers the beach.”

“ What a tranquil brightness a fine winter’s  
“ day sheds over the sea ! How does night  
“ spread over the waters a covering of frost  
“ brilliant as the stars !”

Klopstock was certainly right in recommending this employment of our bodily powers, which

restores us to the vivacity of childhood, excites youth to display its flexibility and agility, and tends to withhold age from sinking into inertness. We indulged with passion in this amusement. A fine day passed in skimming over the ice was not sufficient for us: we prolonged our exercise during a great part of the night; for whilst other efforts fatigue the body when too long continued, this, on the contrary, seems to increase its spring and force. The moon emerging in brilliancy from the bosom of the clouds to illumine vast meadows converted into fields of ice, the night breeze sighing as it approached us in our career, the reports of the cracking ice falling with a thundering noise into the waters which yielded to its weight, the whirring of our skates—all gave us the strongest impression of a scene from Ossian. We took it in turns to recite odes from Klopstock; and when we met at twilight, we used to make the welkin ring with the sincere praises of the poet, whose genius had encouraged our pleasures.

“What!” we exclaimed, “is he not immortal  
“to whom we are indebted for healthful joyous-  
“ness, exceeding all that the swift career of  
“the spirited horse, or the airy motions of  
“the nimble dance, could ever afford?”

“How much gratitude is due to the privileged  
“being, who can ennoble our very pastimes by

“ the graces of his muse, and render them more  
“ delightful by adorning them with the gay  
“ colours of poetry !”

As boys whose intellectual faculties have made great progress forget every thing for the most simple games of childhood, when once they have regained a taste for them, so did we appear, in our sports, to lose sight entirely of the more serious matters that demanded our attention. It was nevertheless this exercise, this abandonment to motion without object, that awakened in me more noble inclinations, long since stagnated within me; and I was indebted to these apparently lost hours for the more rapid development of my old plans.

I had long previously acquired a taste for the obscure periods of German history, upon which I was always intent. To take Goëtz von Berlichingen, with the costume and appendages of his time, as the subject of a dramatic work, appeared to me a lucky thought! I applied to the original sources; I studied Datts' work on the Public Peace with great application. I figured to myself as correctly as possible the characteristic features of the period. These moral and poetical views might also, I conceived, be serviceable to me in another respect: they were so many materials to fit me for the studies I was about to terminate at Wetzlar. The imperial chamber of justice was one of the establishments destined to

maintain the public peace, and its history was an excellent clue for disentangling the confused statements in our annals. The constitution of the tribunals and the army is, in fact, the most correct indication of the constitution and real state of an empire. Even the finances, to which so much importance is attached, are far from being in reality equally material; for when the treasury is empty, it is only taking from individuals what they have amassed by the sweat of their brows, and by this easy expedient the state is always rich enough!

It is here proper to introduce a short notice of this imperial chamber of Wetzlar, of which I was about to study the basis, the proceedings, and the abuses.

The German States being desirous to put an end to the anarchy that prevailed in Germany, proposed the establishment of a supreme court of justice. Such an institution, supposing it judiciously conceived, tended to increase the authority of the Diet, whilst it limited the imperial power. The Emperor Frederic III. accordingly eluded its establishment. His son Maximilian, being pressed by foreign opposition, was more inclined to conciliatory measures, and created the supreme tribunal. The diet sent counsellors to it; they were to be twenty-four in number, but twelve only were appointed at first.



The radical and incurable defect of this institution was that which attaches to almost all human establishments. Inadequate means were employed for the execution of a vast plan. The number of the assessors was too limited. But how would it have been possible to accomplish the object originally proposed? The Emperor did not look with a favourable eye on an institution rather injurious than beneficial to his power. As for the States, they regarded it only as the means of staying the effusion of blood by the abolition of private wars and the maintenance of the public peace. But they dreaded fresh expenses, and wished to obtain the advantages they sought as cheaply as possible.

The sovereign court, however, commenced its functions. Scarcely had it assembled, when it began to feel its strength, and to be sensible of the eminence on which it was placed, and of all its political importance. The zeal and industry which it at first displayed, obtained it great influence and respect throughout the empire. Many complicated affairs and private suits remained, however, in suspense. But the evil consequences of these delays did not fall upon the empire; they injured only a certain number of families. If the lawfulness of some few titles was not very clearly proved, property and proprietors in general were secured, violence was repressed, and the empire enjoyed peace. In

order to act with full efficacy, the court only wanted the privilege of placing the guilty under the ban of the empire.

But the reduction of the number of assessors and frequent interruptions in the sittings of the chamber, caused by changes of residence, produced an immense accumulation of business in arrear.

On the peace of Westphalia several men of talent endeavoured to contrive a lever to raise this rock of Sisyphus. It was determined that the number of assessors should be increased to fifty. But the dread of expense again reduced them to half that number. Yet it would have required only two hundred thousand florins to pay fifty assessors; a sum that would have been but a trifling burthen to Germany. The interests of the two prevailing religions opposed the scheme of applying part of the property of the church to the expenses of the chamber. The catholics were unwilling to make further sacrifices; the protestants did not choose to part with what they had acquired. In consequence of these divisions, the interest taken by the States in this institution daily decreased. The most powerful princes sought to free themselves from its authority; they were unwilling to be liable to the jurisdiction of a supreme court, and they refused to contribute to its expenses. The weaker princes, considering themselves overcharged, deferred the payment of their contingent as long as possible.

A new obligation imposed on the chamber became a fresh cause of the loss of its time. It had already been subjected to an annual inspection. Princes or their delegates repaired to the city in which it sat, and examined the state of its treasury and the means of securing its receipts. They were at the same time charged to accelerate the progress of business, and to remedy abuses. They were afterwards entrusted with the power of prosecuting and punishing the personal faults of the members of the chamber. As the suitors constantly endeavoured to prolong their hopes of success by appeals to the supreme jurisdictions, the inspectors soon became a court of revision, to which recourse was often had, for the purpose of perpetuating the proceedings.

Notwithstanding these various disadvantages, this institution would have been very efficacious, had the sovereign court, when first established, consisted of a sufficient number of members. In that case it would really have merited the title of the Amphictyonic tribunal, which was conferred upon it only to add to its dignity. It might have become a respectable power, and an intermediate between the head and the members of the empire.

But, instead of this, it went on in a languishing, ineffectual manner during the reign of Charles the Fifth and the thirty years' war. It is even a wonder how men could be found zealous enough

to devote themselves to such unthankful labours. But such persons were found, and their perseverance does honour to the national character.

The president Furstemberg, who, in those times of anarchy evinced extraordinary integrity and firmness, is still held in honour. His death was followed by the most mischievous abuses. The magistrates, being obliged to select from the immense mass of business such as merited the preference, opened the door to partiality and intrigue. It often happened that when suits had long been protracted, the deaths of parties or amicable arrangements had put an end to the litigation, and nobody was interested in obtaining judgment. To obviate this inconvenience, the court began to give judgment only when solicited; which innovation produced still more heinous abuses, and frequent attempts at corruption.

The army and tribunals were the first objects of the attention of Joseph II. on his elevation to the imperial throne. His own ideas and the example of Frederick the Great led him to pay great attention to these important institutions. He observed the irregularities and abuses which had crept into the sovereign chamber; and without first satisfying himself of the possibility of a reform, he ordered an immediate inspection to take place. This had not been regularly done

for one hundred and sixty-six years. An immense mass of arrears had accumulated, and was every year increasing. Seventeen assessors, the number of the effective members, were unable to get through even the current business. Twenty thousand old causes were in suspense. The number of causes waiting for revision might be estimated at fifty thousand. The course of justice was, moreover, impeded by a multitude of abuses, the most serious of which was the corruption of some of the assessors.

When I reached Wetzlar, the inspection had been several years in progress; the accused assessors had been suspended from their functions, and inquiries into their offences were proceeding. The most zealous and best-informed professors of public law in Germany had published works in which they developed their plans for the benefit of society. On perusal of these works, which laid before us the constitution of the empire, one could not but wonder how so monstrous a political body, weakened by so many disorders, could continue to subsist. The conflict of opinions, disputes on the rights of the emperor and empire, the great and small states, the catholics and the protestants, occupied all minds.

The more I examined into the state of affairs, the less reason did I see to promise myself an agreeable residence at Wetzlar. A small and ill-

built, though well-situated town; two classes of inhabitants, the natives and strangers, and the latter employed in thoroughly scrutinizing the conduct of the former; one tribunal trying, and another under trial; a great number of inhabitants apprehensive of being implicated in the informations; many persons who had long been respected, now convicted of criminal acts, and threatened with the most shameful punishments;—all these circumstances together produced the most distressing ideas, and rendered it extremely unpleasant to meddle in affairs so intricate in themselves, and further complicated by so many external causes.

I had been induced to visit this city by the desire of gaining knowledge, and a wish for change of situation. I had been persuaded that the civil and public law of Germany would there be my only studies, and that I should have to relinquish all poetical subjects. I was therefore agreeably surprised at finding, instead of dull, tedious society, all the enjoyments of academic life. At an excellent *table d'hôte* I met with several agreeable young men of the town, and others belonging to the commission of inspection. An order of chivalry had been instituted amongst them; a matter wholly insignificant at bottom, and established only for the amusement of the members. Gotter, one of the company, induced me to com-

pose a few verses which he sent to the editor of the Gottingen Almanac, with which he was connected.

This circumstance brought me into communication with several young men of great talents, who have since acquired celebrity by their literary labours; amongst whom were the two Counts Stolberg, Bürger, Voss, Hæltz, and several others, all united in inclination and opinion by their devotion to Klopstock, whose influence was of universal extent. In this daily increasing circle of German poets, distinguished by diversified talents, a spirit soon manifested itself of a nature wholly foreign to poetry, and which I know not well how to characterize: I shall, however, venture to call it that thirst for independence which originates in the bosom of peace. During war we endure the constraint of force as well as we can. We suffer in person and property, but not in conscience. We yield without shame to the yoke of necessity. We grow accustomed to ill usage both from friends and enemies. We form wishes, but we have no will of our own. In peace, on the contrary, we abandon ourselves to the sentiment of liberty so natural to man, which, the more we enjoy it, the more we wish to extend. We conceive an aversion to all constraint; and this delicate sentiment, irritable as the temper of the sick, assumes in noble minds

the colour of a love of justice. This disposition appeared in all quarters; and even where scarcely a trace of human oppression could be perceived, men were solicitous to oppose that of fate. Thus a kind of moral insurrection and conspiracy burst forth, which, although laudable in its origin, ended in unfortunate results which had not been foreseen.

Voltaire had done himself honour by the distinguished protection he had afforded to the Calas family. Lavater's enterprise against the grand bailly of Zurich excited still more notice in Germany, and produced a greater effect: this sentiment of the beautiful in morality, excited by the courage of youth, spread rapidly in all directions. Men had hitherto studied, in order to qualify themselves for employments; and acquired knowledge, in order to watch those who were in office. The time was approaching when dramatists and romance-writers were to choose their odious characters from amongst ministers and agents of power. At a subsequent period, journalists and authors indulged, with a kind of fury, under colour of an ardent zeal for justice, in provocatives addressed to the public, which they looked upon as a tribunal established to decide every thing in the last resort. But their efforts were unavailing. In Germany, which is parcelled out into so many states, there is no



public possessed of effective strength ; no power in public opinion to protect or condemn at pleasure those who are subjected to its judgment.

In the circle of my young acquaintances, there was nothing which indicated this kind of impulse, or could expose us to any such accusation ; yet the spirit which animated us in our poetical enthusiasm was in some degree analogous to this inclination to independence.

Klopstock had strongly excited every German mind, by his battle of Arminius, and his dedication of that poem to Joseph II. The poet had painted in powerful and brilliant colours the energetic efforts of the Germans to throw off the Roman yoke. These images were well adapted to rouse national pride ; but in peace, patriotism ought to consist only in the performance of private duties.\* This patriotic feeling, excited by Klopstock, had no object to exert its power upon. Frederic had defended the honour of a part of Germany against a formidable league ; and every German, whilst he paid homage to that great prince, was entitled to take part in his triumphs. But, at the period we had reached, of what im-

\* Here, as in several other passages, Goëthe seems to advocate indifference in politics. But we, who live under a representative government, may be allowed to think that even in time of peace every citizen has public duties to perform, and ought always to interest and exert himself for his country's welfare.—ED.

portance was this warlike pride? What direction could it take? What effect could it produce? It was a mere burst of poetical enthusiasm, which gave birth to those songs of bards which have since been so much criticized and deemed so ridiculous. Having no longer any real enemy to contend with, people invented tyrants for themselves, and looked for them in the reigning princes and their servants. Poetry entered warmly into public law, and all its productions were impressed with a character of resistance to aristocracy and monarchical power.

For my part, I continued to employ the Muse in the expression of my sentiments and fancies. It was at this period that I composed several little pieces, such as the Traveller, which were inserted in the Gottingen Almanack of the Muses. Such impressions as I felt analogous to the prevailing spirit of the age I soon afterwards inserted in *Goetz Von Berlischingen*. In that piece I represented the errors of an honourable and well-intentioned man, who, misled by the anarchical character of the times he lived in, usurps the place of the laws and public authority, and falls into despair as soon as he finds that the head of the empire, the only power he respects, treats him as a rebellious subject.

Klopstock's odes had introduced into German poetry the nomenclature of the divinities of the North, rather than its antique mythology. I had

long been acquainted with the fables of the Edda, through Mallet's Introduction to the History of Denmark. I often made them the subjects of tales which I recited to my friends. Resenius, whose works Herder had induced me to read, had made me acquainted with the Sagas. But my imagination could not recognize in these fantastic divinities of the North, which too closely resemble the heroes of Ossian, the kind of life with which the deities of Greece and Rome appear to us to be animated by the chisels of the greatest artists the world has produced. Those northern divinities seemed to me too much out of nature. What was I to gain by substituting Woden for Jupiter, and Thor for Mars; and sacrificing the truly celestial figures of the gods of the South to shadows, and even to words without images? Not that I had no taste for the ironical kind of gaiety that pervades the whole of the northern mythology; with the singular dynasty of divinities which it opposes to the giants, enchanters, and monsters who are always engaged in leading its heroes astray, deceiving them, and threatening them with an ignominious end, which, but for the intervention of the gods, would appear inevitable.

A similar kind of interest attached me to the Indian fables, with which I began to get acquainted by means of Dappers's Voyage, and which I added to my mythological stores with

pleasure. The altar of Ram became the ornament of my tales ; and, notwithstanding the incredible multiplicity of the personages of these fables, the ape Hanneman was the favourite of my auditory. But I found all these monstrous personages unfit to form part of my poetical furniture ; the imagination being either unable to conceive them at all, or only able to comprehend them under absurd and ridiculous forms.

A favourable circumstance secured me against the influence of these spectres, so repugnant to my notions of the beautiful in art. It was at this period that certain travellers had several times attempted to diffuse over Homer's poems that light which others had thrown upon the Scriptures. Happy period for letters, when the love of truth and nature in a manner revived the masterpieces of antiquity, and renewed their effects on the feelings by illustrating them with new light ! Guys and Wood successively rendered this service to the father of poetry. We did not, however, adopt the opinion of the day, which compared the characters and manners of Homer's heroes to those of the savages of the new world. How could we fail to remark that his poems discover, in the people he represents, so high a degree of civilization as it is even difficult to conceive they had reached at the period of the siege of Troy ?

But in the midst of these occupations, so

agreeable to a friend of poetry and the arts, I was still sensible that I was at Wetzlar. Conversation perpetually turned on the Chamber of Inspection, the obstacles it met with, and the crimes it was incessantly discovering. This was the second time that the Holy Roman Empire had been laid before my eyes; it was not now by means of public ceremonies and entertainments, but of interests of the highest importance. All I beheld reminded me of what I had seen at Frankfort on the day of the coronation; and particularly of the well-furnished but half-deserted tables at which part of the guests considered it beneath their dignity to seat themselves. Parties were indeed collected together at Wetzlar; but this only rendered the symptoms of discord more evident. The discord and struggle of conflicting interests appeared without disguise; and no one was ignorant that the secret aim of the princes was to take advantage of this opportunity, in order to strip the supreme chief of the empire of some prerogative or other.

What impression could the relation of all these scandalous proceedings be expected to make on a youth sincerely zealous in the cause of virtue? What respect was he likely to retain for laws and judges? Whatever measures the Chamber of Inspection might adopt, how could the results be interesting to young men ardent in every generous sentiment? Besides, the formalities of

these proceedings evidently tended to deaden all energy. The efforts that were making could promote nothing but injustice, by saving the accused; and, in this trial of skill, the victory was sure to belong to those who were most practised in parrying and averting the attacks of their adversaries.

This chaos could supply no materials for my studies of the beautiful: I again plunged into meditations which brought me back to that pursuit. All endeavours to form a theory, betray either a want of power to produce, or the obstacles that impede the flight of genius. I had already tried with Merk, and I was now endeavouring with Gotter, to find out rules and methods of composition. Sulzer's theory of the fine arts was then much talked of; but it was said to be better calculated for amateurs than for artists. His followers required, above all, a moral end; and this was a subject of disagreement between authors and readers, artists and the public. For even if a good work should and must have moral results, it is nevertheless destructive to art and its productions to require the author to keep this object constantly in view whilst his work is in progress.

I had for some years attentively studied, although at intervals, the writings of the ancients on these important subjects. I had meditated on what had been said by Aristotle, Cicero,

Quintilian, and Longinus, but without obtaining the light I was in search of; for all these masters speak according to their experience, and from models which they had themselves observed. They introduced me to a world prodigiously rich in works of art. They pointed out the merit and talents of excellent poets, most of whom are only known to us by name: but they thus clearly proved to me that we must have a great number of objects before our eyes, in order to exercise our thoughts upon them; and that we must begin by composing, even though we should fail in our conceptions, in order to learn how to estimate our own faculties and those of others. It also appeared evident to me, especially with respect to the most celebrated ancient orators, that they had been formed only by the events and circumstances of life, and that their talents could not be separated from their personal sentiments and character. This seemed less positive as to the poets; yet even with them it was the activity of life which had brought nature into contact with art. The result, therefore, of all my observations and reflections was, a resolution to adhere to my original plan, to examine nature attentively, both in myself and in external objects, and to allow it to find expression in free and animated imitations.

Urged daily and nightly by this desire, I incessantly meditated on two subjects, the extent

and richness of which I could never sufficiently explore, although stimulated by the hope of producing some original and remarkable work. These were the ancient period in which Goetz Von Berlischingen had flourished, and the present time, the picture of which, resembling a fading, dying flower, is found in Werther.

I have already mentioned the historical studies by which I prepared myself for the first of these compositions. It is now time to notice the moral causes of the second.

The plan I had adopted, of observing nature within myself as well as externally, leaving all my sensations to act freely upon me, brought me into that singular state of mind, under the influence of which I wrote Werther. I endeavoured to free my mind from all external influence, to regard all that existed beyond myself with benevolence and affection, and to leave all beings, commencing with man, to produce their effects upon me according to their respective natures, that I might comprehend them as thoroughly as possible. This mode of feeling gave me, if I may so express it, a particular affinity with every object; attuned me to harmony with all nature; and rendered my soul like an internal echo, in which every sound was reverberated. The eye of the painter was combined in me with the sensibility of the poet. A fine and richly cultivated country, fertilized by a bene-



ficent stream, increased my love of solitude and encouraged my tranquil meditations, whilst it allowed them to range freely and unconfined.

But ever since I had been separated from the charming family of the minister of Sesenheim, and from my friends at Frankfort and Darmstadt, a painful void had existed in my soul. I was in that situation which opens our hearts to an insinuating tenderness, that suddenly steals upon us, masters our reason, and overturns the most prudent resolutions.

Having reached this period of my life, I now find that my task is become easier, and that I can proceed with increased confidence. In fact, my work now first begins to tend directly towards the aim I proposed to myself in writing it. I have not promised a complete work : my intention was rather to supply a few blanks in the history of my life, to rectify some errors, and to preserve the memory of some almost forgotten attempts. Vainly, indeed, would the poet invoke an almost exhausted fancy ; in vain would he require it to describe in lively colours that delightful intercourse which once rendered the valley that is watered by the Lahn his favourite retreat. But happily a friendly genius long since undertook this office, and urged him, in the vigour of youth, to examine and delineate for the contemplation of the world the objects which had given him so much pleasure. This genius

gave him courage to present the picture of the happiest period of his life. It is surely unnecessary to add that I am here alluding to Werther. I have now only to give some explanations relative to the characters I have introduced in that work, and the sentiments I have ascribed to them.

Amongst the young men whom the deputation of inspectors allowed to prepare themselves for official situations, by acting under their orders, there was one on whom, amongst ourselves, we usually bestowed the appellation of "the Betrothed." He was remarkable for the extraordinary evenness of his temper and the clearness of his ideas. All his words and actions indicated one of those men who always know precisely what they would have. His unembarrassed industry and unremitting application had obtained him the notice of his superiors, and the promise of speedy promotion; and this reasonable ground of hope had induced him to plight his faith to a young lady whose character afforded him the fairest hopes of a happy union. After his mother's death, this lady had undertaken the management of the family, and had consoled his father by the zeal and intelligence she had displayed in her care of his numerous infant children—a happy omen for him on whom her hand was to be bestowed. He might fairly expect her to prove a good wife and mother. Nor was

it necessary to be so particularly interested, in order to perceive that she was a person worthy of the affections of a man of merit. She was one of those who may not, perhaps, excite violent passions, but who please generally. A graceful form, a pleasing countenance, a pure heart, a sweet temper, a cheerful activity resulting from this happy disposition, an easy and exemplary method of performing the daily duties requisite in the care of a family—all these gifts were her portion. I had always observed such qualities with peculiar pleasure, and been fond of the society of women endowed with them. If I could find no opportunity of being useful to them, I at least shared with them, more willingly than with others of their sex, the innocent joys of youth, which every moment renews, and which may be procured without trouble and with so little expense. It is allowed that women indulge in dress only for the purpose of exciting envy in each other; and that in this rivalry, which frequently destroys their best qualities, they are indefatigable. Those, accordingly, appeared to me the most amiable, whose simple and modest toilette aims only at decency, and satisfies the lover—the intended husband—that they think of him alone, and that they can pass their lives happily without splendour or luxury.

Ladies who resemble her whose portrait I have sketched, are not the slaves of their occupa-

tions. They can find time for company, and can disengage their minds sufficiently to enjoy it. A suitable propriety of behaviour costs them no effort, and a little reading suffices to form their minds. Such was this amiable bride elect. Her intended husband, with the confidence natural to men of an honourable character, introduced to her, without hesitation, all whom he loved or esteemed. Entirely occupied in business during the greater part of the day, he was glad to see his mistress amuse herself with a walk or a little excursion into the country, with her friends of both sexes, after having completed her daily round of household cares. Lolotte, for this name exactly suits her, was, in every respect, unpretending. She was rather inclined by her disposition to a general benevolence than any determined preference; she considered herself, moreover, as consecrated to a man worthy to possess her, whose fate might, at any moment, be eternally united with hers. The air that surrounded her might be said to breathe serenity. It is a delightful sight to behold fathers and mothers devoting themselves wholly to their children; but it is something still more interesting to see a sister display a maternal affection towards her brothers and sisters. The former sentiment seems to be inspired by nature and habit; the latter has more the appearance of free will and generous sensibility.


As a new comer, free from all engagements, I felt myself in full security in the presence of a young lady whose hand was engaged. She could not interpret the marks of the most perfect devotion as attempts to attach her to me ; and she was therefore free to accept them as disinterested proofs of affection and esteem. I neither wished to be, nor could be, more than her friend, and hence I was the more easily enthralled. The youthful couple shewed a sincere friendship for me, and treated me with perfect confidence. I, who had hitherto been idle and absent, like a man dissatisfied with his condition, now found all I wanted in a female friend, who, although her thoughts were constantly fixed on the future, knew how to abandon herself to the present moment. She took pleasure in my company ; and it was not long before I found it impossible to exist out of hers. I had daily opportunities of seeing her : we might all be said to live together, and we became almost inseparable, at home and abroad. As soon as business left the lover at liberty, he flew to the presence of his mistress. Thus, without thinking of it, we all three accustomed ourselves to each other, and always found ourselves together, without having formed any plan for meeting. We lived together in this manner a whole summer, like the characters of a true German Idyl, the foundation of which was a fertile country, whilst a pure, lively, and

sincere attachment formed its poetry. We took walks amidst rich harvests, moistened by the copious dew of the morning; we listened to the cheerful song of the lark, and the quail's shrill cry. If the heat became oppressive, or a storm overtook us, we never thought of separating; and the charm of an affection equally constant and tender easily dispelled any little domestic anxieties. Thus one day succeeded another, and all were holidays to us. Our whole calendar might have been printed in red letters. Whoever remembers the expressions of the happy and ill-fated lover of Julia will easily understand me: "Seated at the feet of my beloved, I shall peel  
" hemp, and desire nothing further, this day, to-  
" morrow, the day after—all my life."

I must now introduce a person whose name will hereafter appear but too often; I mean Jerusalem, the son of the celebrated theologian. He held a place under the deputation. He was a middle-sized young man, but elegant, and of prepossessing appearance. His face was almost a perfect oval; his features delicate and mild, as we usually see them in a handsome fair-haired man: his blue eyes were rather beautiful than expressive. His dress was that of Lower Germany, and imitative of the English costume. He wore a blue frock, a yellow leather waistcoat, and boots with brown tops. We never visited each other, but I often met him in company.

His manners were reserved, but amiable. He took an interest in the productions of the arts, and was fond of drawings or sketches representing the calm character of profound solitude. He praised Gessner's engravings, and recommended the study of them. He seldom joined in social amusements, and was fond of living to himself and his own ideas. His attachment to the wife of one of his friends was talked of; but he was never seen in public with the object of his love. On the whole, people knew very little of his affairs, except that he devoted much time to the study of English literature. His father being rich, he did not take a very active part in business, or exert himself much to obtain an appointment.

Gessner's engravings, which this young man shewed us, increased our taste for rural scenery and the pleasure it afforded us. A poetical production, which our little circle hailed with transport, soon occupied all our attention; this was "Goldsmith's Deserted Village." This poem seemed perfectly adapted to the sentiments which then actuated us. The pictures it presented were those which we loved to contemplate, and sought with avidity, in order to enjoy them with all the zest of youth. Village fêtes, wakes and fairs; the grave meeting of the elders under the village trees, to which they have retreated in order to leave the young to



the pleasures of the dance; the part taken by persons of more elevated rank in these village entertainments; the decency maintained in the midst of the general hilarity by a worthy clergyman, skilled to moderate mirth when approaching to boisterousness, and to prevent all that might produce discord; such were the representations the poet laid before us, not as the objects of present attention and enjoyment, but as past pleasures, the loss of which excited regret. We found ourselves once more in our beloved Wakefield, amidst its well known circle. But those interesting characters had now lost all life and movement, they appeared only like shades called up by the plaintive tones of the elegiac muse. The idea of this poem appears singularly happy to those who can enter into the author's intention, and who, like him, find a melancholy pleasure in recalling innocent joys long since fled. I shared all Gotter's enthusiasm for this charming production. We both undertook to translate it, but he succeeded better than I did, because I had too scrupulously endeavoured to transfuse the tender and affecting character of the original into our language. I had effected my purpose in a few stanzas, but had failed in the general effect.

If it be true, as some pretend, that to desire ardently is to be happy, even when the most genuine passion is excited by an unattainable



object, every thing concurred to render the man who is depicted in this work, and whose erring steps we are now tracing, the happiest of mortals. His attachment to a young lady betrothed to another, his efforts to enrich our literature with a foreign *chef-d'œuvre*, his eagerness to imitate the beauties of nature, not only with his pen but with his pencil, all these desires, or any one of them, might surely have sufficed to make his heart palpitate and to excite his enthusiasm. Let us now see how he was torn from these agreeable occupations, and what new circumstances exposed him to fresh troubles.

George Schlosser had undertaken, with Merk, the publication of a new journal, entitled the "Literary Gazette of Frankfort." They had engaged the assistance of Hopfner, professor of law in the university of Giessen, and of other members of that academy; of the rector Wenck, a much esteemed professor at Darmstadt; and of several other co-operators, each distinguished in his department by extensive acquirements; the spirit of the time left each of them at liberty to follow his natural impulse. The first two years of this journal, which afterwards passed into other hands, afford sufficient proofs of the attainments, sagacity, and upright intentions of the editors. My friends well knew the deficiency which prevented my seconding them, nor did I disguise it from myself. My attainments

of every kind were devoid of connexion and system. I was well acquainted with only certain periods of history, and certain parts of the sciences and of literature. I was, indeed, master of what I did know, and capable of representing with energy and vivacity every thing belonging to it. I was also allowed to possess a certain tact in theory and practice, by means of which I could possess myself of objects, shewing them, however, such as they ought to have been rather than as they were in fact, and presenting them according to my own notions, without knowing how to subject them to philosophical method and order. I also possessed a great facility of conception, and a candid readiness to attend to the opinions of others, when not too directly opposed to my own sentiments and observations. Such were the qualities which procured my admission into this association of men of distinguished merit.

An active correspondence, and the frequent conferences which the proximity of the residences of the different members of the society allowed, promoted the success of the enterprize. The first of us who read a book wrote remarks upon it. When more than one of us sent observations on any work, they were compared together, and as soon as the result was agreed on, one of our number undertook to reduce it to writing. Thus most of our extracts were

thoroughly studied, and as entertaining as useful. I often held the pen: my friends allowed me to criticize their works, and to treat matters I had a particular taste for, or took great interest in, as I thought proper. The articles thus published during these two years enabled me to represent the spirit of that period.

In this daily interchange of knowledge, sentiments and ideas, I learned to know and appreciate Hopfner better than I had done. I found him a learned and enlightened man in the science he professed, which I was likewise destined to cultivate. I was not yet sufficiently convinced of the advantages of books and conversation over the instructions of professors, to derive solid improvement from them. Still I was sensible that with a book, I could dwell upon a passage, or return to the commencement of a subject, which was not practicable with the discourses of a master. If an idea occurred to me, whilst listening to a professor, I lost the thread of his dissertation; a thing which had often happened to me in my course of law. Hopfner, however, had the kindness to enter into my ideas, to discuss my doubts, and complete my instruction. Hence I conceived a wish to visit him occasionally at Giessen, for the sake of improvement, without too much neglecting the matters which kept me at Wetzlar: but two other friends opposed this wish.

at first undesignedly, but afterwards from a preconcerted plan. They were in haste to quit Wetzlar, and were particularly interested in getting me to leave that town likewise.

Schlosser acknowledged to me that he had formed an intimacy with my sister, which, having commenced in friendship, had afterwards been cemented by a more lively sentiment; and he was only waiting for an appointment, to which he had been promised an early nomination, in order to unite himself with her. Although my sister's letters might have led me to expect this communication, I was much surprised at it, and for the first time, I perceived that I was really jealous of her tenderness; and I found it the more difficult to conceal this sentiment from myself, as our friendship had become closer than ever since my return from Strasburg. How many hours had we passed in mutually confiding to each other the secrets of our hearts, the mysteries of love, or of other kinds, which had occupied us whilst separated from each other! And had not a vast field in the ideal world been opened to me, which I wished her also to range in? I used to translate to her, *impromptu*, those passages of Homer which I thought she would find most interesting; I began by reading Clarke's literal translation to her in my best German. Afterwards my translation naturally assumed the poetical forms; and my

vivacity in seizing the images of the great painter, together with the warmth of my expressions, freed my translation from all appearance of servility and constraint. Her mind readily received the impressions thus communicated to it by mine; and thus the hours passed away in this pleasing occupation. When her friends were assembled about her, the wolf Fenris, or the ape Hanneman was unanimously called for. How often was I required to repeat the marvellous history of Thor and his Companions, changed into apes by the enchantments of the giants. I remember these poetical inventions with pleasure, and reckon them amongst the most brilliant productions of my imagination. I had also introduced my Darmstadt friends to Cornelia. Thus my excursions served only to strengthen the ties of friendship between us, by means of our active correspondence, and the interest which she took in it; but my present absence from Frankfort had in some degree checked the vivacity of this intercourse. My residence at Wetzlar did not supply the same materials to support it, and my tender inclination for Charlotte had made me neglect Cornelia: in a word she felt herself abandoned, and perhaps thought she was forgotten. The constant attentions of a man of honour, whose habitual gravity and reserve rendered his passion the more interesting, easily found access to her heart. I took my measures with a good

grace, and congratulated my friend on his happiness, although my vanity whispered that the brother's absence had promoted the friend's success.

Now this friend, my brother-in-law elect, was materially interested in getting me back to Frankfort; he relied on my good offices with my parents and Cornelia. On his leaving Wetzlar I was obliged to promise that I would speedily follow him.

Merk being master of his own time, I had expected that he would make a long stay at Giessen, where he could attend to our Literary Gazette, and that I might thus continue to profit by the lessons of the worthy Hopfner. But as love had removed Schlosser, Merk's antipathy to the university rendered Giessen a very disagreeable residence to him. He detested the gross rudeness of the students. Having passed his youth in French Switzerland, and since that period been accustomed to elegant and polished society, he could not endure roughness and ill-breeding. He speedily brought me back to Wetzlar.

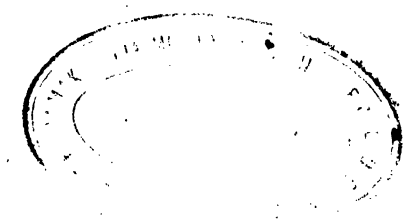
I presented him to Charlotte; but his presence in our little society was not beneficial to us: like Mephistopheles he carried sorrow wherever he was introduced. His indifference to this amiable girl did not alter my regard for him, but nevertheless it gave me some pain. I ought to have recollected that women attrac-

tive by their virtues and graces, but modest and unpretending, were not to his taste. He looked upon my inclination for Charlotte merely as time lost.

There is always a disadvantage attending the introduction of a friend to the object of our attachment: if he become enamoured of her, we have created a rival; if she do not happen to please him, we are liable to hear her depreciated. My esteem and affection for Charlotte were beyond the reach of Merk's malicious observations. Nevertheless his disagreeable presence amongst us, and his ill-natured and ironical conversation, hastened my departure. I had long wished to travel along the Rhine; he was preparing for this tour, and pressed me to accompany him. I therefore parted from Charlotte with a conscience more void of offence than when I had left Frederica, but not without much grief. The force of an agreeable habit, and the indulgent kindness I met with, had infused too much passion into my friendship. As to Charlotte and her intended, they had confined their attachment to me within the bounds of a reasonable affection. The amenity of this connexion, still perfectly accordant with decency and reason, was precisely what had rendered me blind to my danger, by inspiring me with a deceitful confidence of security. But I could no longer avoid perceiving that my romance was drawing towards its close; for the

young man was soon to receive his appointment. There was now nothing to prevent his union with his lovely betrothed mistress. As long as we retain any command over ourselves, we can always make a virtue of necessity. I therefore resolved to withdraw, before this marriage, which I could not bear to think of witnessing, should compel me to leave the place.

END OF VOL. I.





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